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Gail Joyce Shapiro

Nova Southeastern University, Gailshap18@gmail.com

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Identifying the Factors That Influence Conflict Management Behavior of Human
Resource Professionals in the Workplace: An Analysis of the Relationship Between
Personality and Conflict Management Behavior

by

Gail J. Shapiro

A Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2014

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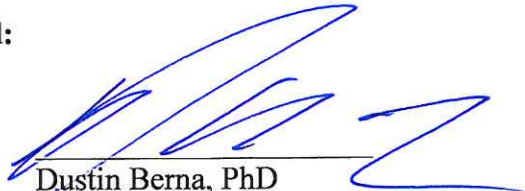
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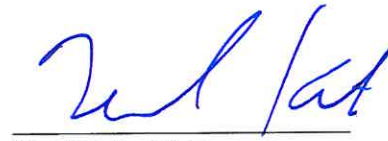
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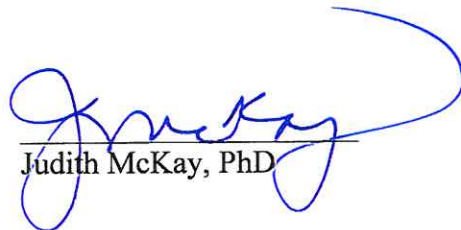
This dissertation was submitted by Gail J. Shapiro under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

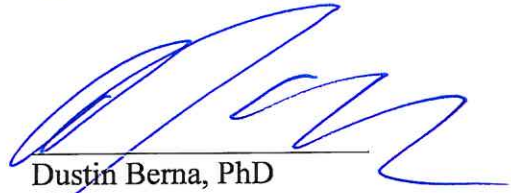
7/23/14
Date of Defense


Dustin Berna, PhD
Chair


Neil Katz, PhD


Judith McKay, PhD

8/23/14
Date of Final Approval


Dustin Berna, PhD
Chair

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, Helen. I miss you every day and you are forever remembered and cherished.

I also dedicate this publication to my husband, Brian, for your love, enthusiasm, and encouragement. I could not have done this without you.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my two sons: Aaron and Eric.

You guys mean everything to me.

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Abstract

Effective conflict management in the workplace can reduce the negative consequences of conflict. These negative outcomes can include low productivity, health-related stress, increased employee turnover, or litigation. A Human Resource (HR) professional can help mitigate these negative outcomes in the workplace when using effective conflict management behavior with employees. However, there is a void in research pertaining to HR professionals' use of conflict management behavior.

This quantitative, correlational research study examined whether personality has an impact on assertive or cooperative conflict management behavior of HR professionals in the workplace. Statistical testing found a significant relationship between the harmonious, people-person (a Blue personality in the *True Colors* personality model) and the assertive conflict management behavior. Another finding of this study sheds light on the need for conflict resolution (CR) education and training in the HR field. The majority of HR professionals in this study said “yes” to wanting and needing training and education in the CR skillset. This skillset includes many of the same specific strategies that are used by mediators (reflective listening, reframing, building rapport, step-by-step problem-solving, etc.). These skills would also enable HR professionals to manage and resolve interpersonal employee conflict before it escalates and leads to negative outcomes.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Justification

Conflict is found everywhere since it is part of life and a part of business life (Shetach, 2012). Interpersonal conflict can create “organizational dysfunction” if not resolved or managed effectively in the workplace (Darling & Walker, 2001, p. 230). Organizational managers spend 25% to 60% of their time dealing with employee conflict (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011; Kohlrieser, 2007). The Human Resource (HR) professional’s role includes many functions having to do with taking care of and making decisions about employees in order to “optimize their value” (DelCampo, 2011). This is because employees are resources in a business who contribute to its strength (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; DelCampo, 2011; Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012).

The job description for HR professionals includes many tasks that require them to personally manage every aspect of the employment cycle from hiring to firing employees. The HR professional’s job is to maintain the health of the organization through enforcing policies, implementing procedures, hiring, compensating, motivating, training, and disciplining (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; DelCampo, 2011; Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). The HR professionals’ role often includes conflict management with employees (Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). This means helping employees work through conflicts. Despite the inevitable presence of conflict in the workplace, few studies have examined the HR professional’s conflict management behavior. Furthermore, there are various ways to manage conflict and choosing the appropriate conflict management mode or style is an important part of managing conflict and improving relations in the workplace (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Brusko, 2010; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Wilmot &

Hocker, 2007). However, there is a lack of research about the HR professional's choice of conflict management mode when interacting with employees.

The management of conflict is an important topic for many business owners, managers, and leaders (Dewa, Corbière, Durand, & Hensel, 2012; CPP, Inc., 2008; Lipsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). This is because businesses can have negative outcomes from mismanaged or unresolved conflict. These can include inefficient teamwork, lack of staff collaboration; insufficient communication processes, faulty product development, and employees quitting or getting fired (Brusko, 2010; Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011; CPP, Inc., 2008; Kohlrieser, 2007; OPP & Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2008; Shetach, 2012). A study conducted by OPP and the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2008) with over 5,000 employees from the United States, Brazil, and eight western European countries, found 25% of the employees were involved in conflict at work that resulted in employee absences. Furthermore, those surveyed also said close to 10% of projects failed as a result of workplace conflict.

CPP, Inc. (2008) researched 5,000 workers in different business around the world. Those surveyed were asked if managing conflict was an important leadership skill for managers and other organizational leaders. This study found 67% of the employees reported that conflict management was a very important skill for leaders (CPP, Inc., 2008). Furthermore, 54% of the employees in CPP, Inc.'s (2008) study stated that organizational leaders needed to address and manage conflicts in their early stages before they escalated. Further, they also found that organizational leaders most often did not help the situation because they avoided conflict (CPP, Inc., 2008). This was also found in

other organizational conflict studies (Bolton, 1979; Truitt, 1991; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007).

Purpose and Goals of the Study

The primary purpose of this quantitative study was to examine whether significant associations exist between personality style, as measured by the Word Cluster Instrument (Lowry, 1988), and the two dimensions of conflict management modes (task-oriented assertive or relationship-oriented cooperative), as measured by the ROCI-II (Rahim, 2011), in a sample of HR professionals in the United States. This was addressed by conducting statistical analyses. One goal of this study was to expand upon the limited amount of literature that has examined associations between personality styles and the two dimensions of conflict management modes for HR professionals (e.g., Ahmed, Nawaz, Shaukat, & Usman, 2010). The HR field, and the conflict analysis and resolution field will benefit in understanding the relationship between dominant personality type and the dimensions of the conflict management modes.

This research can impact HR training and education by motivating those in the HR field to make conflict management and conflict resolution topics a standard for HR professionals to learn. The findings contribute to the HR field by bringing the topic of conflict analysis and resolution into HR trainings and educational programs. This information can guide the development of educational programs and curricula that enhance HRM students' conflict management skills and capabilities that are most effective for HR professionals (Brockman, Nunez, & Basu, 2010; Wood & Bell, 2008). Another goal of this study was to raise awareness of conflict styles and behavior of HR professionals. This study provided self-insight and can build the confidence of the HR

professional by providing information regarding the different personalities' values, strengths, and conflict triggers combined with the conflict behaviors. Understanding personality behaviors along with conflict modes can help a person see conflict patterns, as well as causes of conflict, and help an individual choose which approach to use (Jones & Brinkert, 2008). This knowledge can help HR professionals learn how to be effective conflict managers.

Organizational leaders may not always treat interpersonal conflict in a systematic fashion (Constantino & Merchant, 1996) but it helps to have an awareness of conflict modes and their two dimensions and how they relate to a particular personality type (Jones & Brinkert, 2008). The results of this study can provide the HR professional with an understanding of one's unique strengths and capabilities. This insight can help individuals explain their behavior based on their personality type in a non-violent manner (Rosenberg, 2005). Furthermore, insight into an individual's conflict behavior can help one focus more on creative problem-solving (Cloke, 2001; Landau Landau, & Landau, 2001) rather than causing stressful and negative emotions (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005). The purpose of this study was to investigate the two dimensions of conflict modes (task-oriented assertive and relationship-oriented cooperative) of HR professionals using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) and determine if there are any statistically significant relationships between True Colors personality types as determined by the Word Cluster Assessment Instrument (WCA) and the two dimensions of conflict modes among HR professionals.

Definition of Terms

CR Skillset. CR stands for conflict resolution. The CR skillset contains skills that lend themselves to resolving and managing conflicts. These skills include behaviors involving positive, nonviolent communication that are used in negotiation, mediation, conflict coaching, facilitation, and collaborative actions. Katz, Lawyer, and Sweedler (2011) list the many skills that fit into the CR skillset. These skills are speaking clearly; reading nonverbal signals; building rapport; asking open-ended, clarifying questions; reflectively listening by reflecting content, feelings, and meanings; utilizing a step-by-step problem-solving process; assertively stating wants and needs nonviolently; using “I” messages; being empathetic; and utilizing different conflict management modes when appropriate based on context and consequences.

Avoiding Mode. Avoiding mode is behavior that is a conflict management mode measured by the ROCI-II which is an instrument used in this study. Avoiding behavior is uncooperative and unassertive and falls in the task-oriented assertive dimension. The avoiding person does not behave with an interest in nurturing the relationship with the other person. The avoiding person does not concern themselves with either their own needs or the other person’s needs. The avoiding person postpones decision-making in regards to the issue and does not speak about or try to deal with a conflict (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Blue Personality. The Blue personality type is one of the four True Colors™ (TC) personality types (Kashiwa, 2001; Lowry, 1988; Maddron, 2002). A person with a Blue personality type is a people person, one who is outgoing, socially engaging, and interpersonally skilled (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). The person with a Blue

personality type values harmony, relationships, and honesty (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). It has been posited that individuals with Blue personality types comprise 15% of the American population (Tunajek, 2011).

Integrating Mode. Integrative mode is behavior that is a conflict management mode measured by the ROCI–II which is an instrument used in this study. It falls into the relationship-oriented or cooperative dimension. Integrative behavior is cooperative and focuses on maintaining and nurturing the relationship with the other person. The integrator discusses needs, values, and wants with the other person to find a solution that meets both parties' needs. It involves both people spending time communicating. Integrating also involves discussing options that are good for each party and together the parties choosing the best option for each of them (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Dominant Mode. Dominant mode is behavior that is not cooperative and does not focus on the relationship between the people. It is placed in the task-oriented /assertive dimension. The dominant person is only interested in their job function (if at work) and fulfilling their needs and interests. They are not interested in nurturing the relationship with the other person, but they are interested in getting what they want (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The dominant mode is a conflict management mode measured by the ROCI–II which is an instrument used in this study.

Compromise Mode. Compromise mode is behavior that involves both relationship – oriented cooperative and task-oriented assertive dimensions. It does not fall within either category. It is not placed in either dimension. The compromiser is interested in both winning some and losing some in order to resolve the conflict quickly. The goal is to get some of their needs met while some of the other person's needs are met as well

(Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). The compromise mode is a conflict management mode measured by the ROCI–II which is an instrument used in this study.

Conflict Management Mode (style). Conflict management style or mode is a set of skills an individual uses to relate to another person during a conflict (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2005; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). It is an individual's way of behaving in a conflict situation. The five styles of conflict management or conflict modes are measured by the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI–II). The ROCI–II is an instrument used in this study. They are Integrating, Obliging, Compromising, Dominating, and Avoiding (Rahim, 1983). Conflict management style/mode is the basic pattern of behavior that an individual uses when dealing with conflict in interpersonal situations (Folger et al., 2005; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Conflict modes can fall into one of two categories or dimensions depending on whether the individual has more or less concern for relationships and focuses more or less on his or her task and personal goals (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Moore, 2003; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007).

Conflict Situation. A conflict situation is a situation when interests, needs, and values of individuals are different and/or incompatible (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Green Personality. The Green personality type is one of the four True Colors™ (TC) personality types (Kashiwa, 2001; Lowry, 1978; Maddron, 2002). Green personalities are analytical in their approach to the world; they like logic and explanations, and they value learning and problem-solving (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). Green personality types comprise 35% of the American population (Tunajek, 2010).

Gold Personality. The Gold personality type is one of the four True Colors (TC) personality types (Kashiwa, 2001; Lowry, 1978; Maddron, 2002). A person with a Gold personality is known for their practicality, dependability, organizing abilities, list-making, responsibility and accountability (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). Gold personalities value hierarchies, rules, regulations, order and structure (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). Almost 50% of the American population are Gold personalities (Tunajek, 2010).

Human Resource (HR) Professional. The job description for the HR professional includes many tasks that require them to personally manage all or some aspects of the employment cycle from hiring to firing employees. The HR professional's job is to maintain the health of the organization through enforcing policies, implementing procedures, hiring, compensating, motivating, training, and disciplining (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; DelCampo, 2011; Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). The HR professionals' role often includes conflict management with employees (Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). HR professionals may be consulted with, counsel, and/or manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. The HR professional may also have various levels of working experience and education in the HR field. They may or may not supervise employees as one of their job functions, and may or may not have had knowledge and training in the CR skillset.

Obliging Mode. Obliging mode is behavior that is cooperative and relationship-oriented. This behavior is the opposite of dominating or competing behavior. The obliging person is more concerned with relationship than satisfying his or her own needs. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) referred to this mode as sacrificing what one wants and

paying more attention to the needs of the other person. The obliging mode is one mode that is measured by the ROCI–II which is an instrument used in this study.

Orange Personality. The Orange personality type is one of the four True Colors (TC) personality types (Kashiwa, 2001; Lowry, 1978; Maddron, 2002). A person with an Orange personality is known to act on impulse; he or she needs a lot of freedom, action, challenge, change, and independence. The Orange personality type person seeks action, excitement, and risks, and loves competition (Kashiwa, 2001; Maddron, 2002). There are about 30% of Oranges in the American population (Tunajek, 2010).

Palest Personality. The palest personality or weakest personality is the color that is listed as the last category in a person's True Colors™ personality profile/spectrum. It is the direct opposite of their primary personality. The palest personality can indicate an individual's conflict triggers because it represents behavior and values that are least like them. Furthermore, since this is the last color in a person's Word Cluster Assessment (WCA) personality assessment results, it indicates the personality traits that are least like a person (Kashiwa, 2001).

Personality Spectrum. The Word Cluster Assessment (WCA) survey gives results according to four colors that represent the four personalities in the True Colors™ Inventory. The results of the survey give the personality profile of a person. The personality profile is ordered in a way that indicates the personality that is most like a person (preferred) to least like a person. An individual's personality profile depends on the WCA results and could be arranged as Gold, Green, Orange, and Blue. The order of this listing of colors is the personality spectrum, and it represents the Gold primary personality, then the Green is the secondary personality, the Orange is the third

personality, and the Blue is the palest or weakest personality in the list or spectrum. This personality spectrum represents the complete picture of a person's behavior, values, needs, and perceptions of the world (Kashiwa, 2001).

Primary Personality. The Primary personality indicates the first category in a listing of four behavioral types or colors as assessed by the WCA instrument that is used in this study (Lowry, 1978). It indicates the main or primary personality type that is most like the individual in the True Colors™ Personality Model. This primary personality works in conjunction with the secondary True Colors' personality type to present a more complete picture of a person's behavior, values, needs, and perceptions (Kashiwa, 2001).

Relationship-Oriented Cooperative Dimension. The relationship-oriented cooperative dimension is sometimes referred to as the concern for relationships category of conflict management behavior. It is one of the two dimensions of conflict management modes/styles (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). A conflict style or mode that falls into the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension indicates that the individual has a concern for the relationship when in conflict with another individual. The ROCI-II assesses five different modes of conflict. The Integrating and Obliging are the two modes identified by the ROCI-II that are categorized in the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension.

Secondary Personality. The secondary personality type is the second personality type that is listed in the True Colors personality profile/spectrum for an individual who has taken the WCA. The secondary personality type works in conjunction with the dominant/primary personality trait of an individual to comprise a more complete explanation of that person's behavior, attitudes, and values. For example, if an individual's Spectrum is Gold, Green, Blue, and Orange, the secondary personality type

is Green. The person would be referred to as a Gold/Green personality. The individual would exhibit Green behaviors along with the primary Gold behaviors (Kashiwa, 2001).

Task-Oriented Assertive Dimension. This is one of the two dimensions of conflict management based on work-related behavior as assessed by ROCI-II. Two of the conflict styles or modes that are measured by ROCI-II fall within the task-oriented assertive dimension. They are the Avoiding conflict mode and the Dominating conflict mode. The task-oriented assertive dimension indicates that the task/job, results, and personal needs are the focus for an individual who is in conflict. A conflict style or mode that falls into the task-oriented assertive dimension indicates that the individual has little concern for the relationship when in conflict with another individual. Furthermore, if one is not interested in the relationship, then their behavior will fall into the task-oriented assertive dimension. This dimension is sometimes called the only the assertive dimension (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Landau et al., 2001; Wilmot & Hocker, 2001).

True Colors Personality Inventory. True Colors (TC) is a personality assessment method developed by Lowry (1978). Lowry (1978) based TC on the writings of Carl Jung, and it is a simplification of Carl Jung's psychological theory (Crews, Bodenhamer, & Weaver, 2010). The colors Orange, Green, Blue, and Yellow each represent certain behavior and attitudes based on Carl Jung's theory. The TC Word Cluster Assessment (WCA) is used to determine an individual's True Color (TC) personality. There are other personality assessment instruments that measure Carl Jung's psychological types but do not use the True Colors Personality Inventory model. The Meyers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, and the

Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory are other popular instruments that measure Carl Jung's psychological types (MMPI) (Harris, 2000; Miscisin, 2001; Najera-Ketterman, 1997).

Two Dimensions of Conflict Management Modes (Dual Concern Model).

Conflict management style/mode is the basic pattern of behavior that an individual uses when dealing with conflict in interpersonal situations (Folger et al., 2005; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Conflict modes can fall into two categories or dimensions depending on whether an individual has more or less concern for relationships and for their own needs and personal goals when engaged in conflict (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Moore, 2003; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). This is also referred to as the Dual concern model. The dimensions or concerns have been called task-oriented or assertive and relationship-oriented or cooperative. This study will use the word task-oriented assertive when referring to a behavior that shows less concern for the interpersonal relationship. In this study, and the word or words relationship-oriented cooperative dimension when referring to a behavior that shows more concern for the interpersonal relationship in the workplace. The conflict modes that are categorized in the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension (C) are Integrating style (IS) and Obliging style (OS). The conflict modes that are categorized in the task-oriented assertive dimension (A) are Avoiding style (AS) and Dominating style (DS).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Interpersonal conflict is a part of life and is present in the workplace (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011; Lipsky et al., 2003). It occurs in the workplace when two or more individuals or groups have differences of opinions and can create organizational dysfunction if not resolved (Darling & Walker, 2001). Furthermore, a conflict situation is a situation when interests, needs, and values of individuals are different and/or incompatible (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). However, conflict is a part of business life and organizational managers spend 25% to 60% of their time managing employee conflict (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011; Kohlrieser, 2007). Interpersonal conflict within organizations can involve disagreements, misunderstandings, and negative interpersonal behavior (Ayoko, 2007; Glomb, 2002; Hodson, Roscigno, & Lopez, 2006).

Interpersonal problems at work can also be a result of each person's perceptions, attitudes, and conflict triggers (Cloke, 2001; Napier & Gershenfeld, 1999; Rahim, 2011). Conflict triggers are each person's negative responses resulting from personality traits or a person's behavior (Sonnentag, Unger, & Nägel, 2013). Napier and Gershenfeld (1999) listed the causes of conflict. These included differences in views, stereotypes, and biases; values, beliefs, and power or lack of it; and communication style, personality, and behavior (Napier & Gershenfeld, 1999). This list of causes of conflict has been supported in research (Armstrong, 2010).

Conflict within the workplace has been defined as a situation when two or more individuals or groups in the work environment have differences of opinions, attitudes, or needs that are seemingly incompatible (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011). Conflict resolution is

a process that is used to end a conflict between two people (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010). Unresolved conflicts are distracting to employees, who must spend valuable work time engaged in conflict (CPP, Inc., 2008; Römer, Rispens, Giebels, & Euwema, 2012). Conflict with co-workers or a supervisor can cause an employee stress (Sonnentag et al., 2013; Wang, Patten, Currie, Sareen, & Schmitz, 2012; Wang, Smailes, et al., 2012). Stress can be a distraction to work attitude and work-product. It can detract from motivation, positive attitude, and focus on tasks (Dewa et al., 2012; Sonnentag et al., 2013; Wang, Patten, et al., 2012; Wang, Smailes, et al., 2012). Additionally, stress from workplace conflict can negatively affect employees' health. This can cause insomnia, chronic fatigue, back pain, and weight gain. These problems can then result in decreased revenue for the company because of their costs (Lallukka, Rahkonen, Lahelma, & Arber, 2010; Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011; Sutton, 2007; Williams & Williams, 1993).

The need for the present study is underscored by the fact that choosing the appropriate conflict management mode is an important part of managing conflict and improving relations in the workplace (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Brusko, 2010; Thoman & Kilmann, 1974; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). One of the most common models of interpreting conflict management style in the workplace is the one developed by Rahim (1983). The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI) is based on a classification of "conflict handling modes" that has been in use for over 30 years. It was developed by Afzalur Rahim based on the two basic categories of conflict behavior called dimensions. The two dimensions are assertiveness (concern for results/ task-oriented) and cooperation (concern for relationships, relationship-oriented). This model has been in use

with variations on the names of the two dimensions. Blake and Mouton first developed this model in regards to production in the workplace. Blake and Mouton (1964) developed an illustration of what managers are focused on when involved in leadership activities. It is a grid with points placed indicating behavior on an “x” and “y” axis. Each axis is either called “concern for production” (task-oriented) or “concern for people” (relationship-oriented) (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Researchers have since used this concept to illustrate an individual’s behavior in conflict situations. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) used Blake and Mouton’s grid with slightly different names on each axis. They used assertiveness and cooperativeness as the dimensions of conflict management style. Within the context of Thomas and Kilmann’s conflict management theoretical perspective, assertiveness is defined as working to satisfy one’s needs rather than being concerned with the other person’s needs, and further used the word cooperativeness to symbolize acting in a way that shows concern for the relationship (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

The ROCI-I and ROCI-II measure five conflict management modes based on the two dimensions of task-oriented assertive behavior or assertiveness (concern for themselves/not interested in the relationship) and relationship-oriented cooperative behavior or cooperation (concern for others/interested in the relationship) (Landau et al., 2001). In other words, the focus when behaving is either on the relationship or the results (Landau et al., 2001). Each mode as determined by the ROCI-II (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding) falls somewhere within one of the two dimensions of cooperatives or assertive/task-oriented behavior (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). The modes that can be in the

cooperative dimension are obliging—sometimes called accommodating and integrating, and sometimes called collaborating. The modes that are in the task-oriented assertive dimension are dominating sometimes called competing and avoiding. The compromise mode is another mode that is determined by the ROC –II, and it falls in the center of the grid and cannot be neatly categorized into either dimension of task-oriented assertive dimension or cooperative dimension (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

The work by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) and later theorists and researchers (e.g., Bowman-Kestner & Ray, 2002; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Rahim, 2011; Somech, Desivilya, & Lidogoster, 2009; Truitt, 1991) has examined the effectiveness of using specific conflict management modes in various situations. Studies have shown that the use of a specific conflict management mode can vary across individuals in response to different conflicts (Katz et al., 2011; Somech et al., 2009; Rahim, 2011; Wood & Bell, 2008).

However, many people have been found to prefer to use one conflict management or conflict resolution mode (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Rahim, 1983). Furthermore, researchers have posited the value in varying the use of particular conflict management modes depending on the situation (Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). For example, the collaborative mode has been shown to be the most effective in situations where both parties have equal say, the time to thoroughly discuss the situation, and the goal is to find the best solution for each party (Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Truitt, 1991). In contrast, the compromising conflict management mode is most effective for situations that require a temporary solution when both parties have equally important interests and needs (Bolton, 1979; Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). However,

most individuals tend to use one conflict management style (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). Thus, many people have patterns and habits of conflict management behavior that they use in the workplace but which may also be inappropriate and lead to negative outcomes (Bowman-Kestner & Ray, 2002; Buchanan & Hucynski, 2010; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). For example, the task-oriented assertive dimension which includes the dominating or avoidance conflict management styles can be destructive. This dimension can be destructive due to the lack of communication involved in this approach which can cause increased tension and anxiety between parties (Bolton, 1979; Buchanan & Hucynski, 2010; Rahim, 2011).

There is a gap in the body of knowledge pertaining to research examining personality styles with regard to leadership (Bligh, 2010). The body of knowledge devotes less attention to the human resource (HR) professional and personality style in relation to the conflict management mode(s) and how it fits into one of the two dimensions (Barbuto, Phipps, & Xu, 2010). HR departments set and implement policies and procedures for dispute resolution within the company (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Delpo & Guerin, 2005; Messmer, 1999). This requires the task-oriented assertive dimension for the individual setting the policies and procedures.

However, there may be other functions that require the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension. For example, a primary role of the HR professional is to strengthen the organization through cultivating an effective workforce (Messmer, 1999; Volkema & Fleck, 2012). They can provide a positive influence using the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension of conflict management and promote peaceful conflict management in the workplace (Ury, 2000). The HR professional can protect the

organization by preventing the destructive outcomes of conflict that can include litigation and losses in workforce productivity and profits when utilizing appropriate conflict management behavior (Delpo & Guerin, 2005; Messmer, 1999).

This study is further underscored by the fact that it can contribute to the HR professional more effectively managing workplace conflict. This is because it can lead to increased understanding and awareness regarding the strategic use of conflict management modes depending on the situation (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Thus, HR professionals can improve their efficacy as conflict managers with conflict management knowledge and skills. Understanding the relationship between personality styles and conflict management modes can help HR professionals see conflict patterns, causes of conflict, and choose which approach to use for the management of the conflict (Jones & Brinkert, 2008, Rahim, 2011). This ability is crucial for those who intend to work in the HR management field (Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012).

Studies such as this one are needed due to the importance of HR professionals developing effective conflict management skills coupled with the fact that in many studies conducted with HRM students, researchers (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2010; Brockman et al., 2010; Wood & Bell, 2008) have recommended that the associations between personality styles and conflict management modes be further examined in research studies with HRM students and HR professionals. Researchers have also explored the relationship between personality style and conflict management modes with graduate and undergraduate students (e.g., Brockman et al., 2010; Forrester & Tashchain, 2013; Ogunyemi, Fong, Elmore, Korwin, & Azziz, 2010; Ogunyemi et al., 2011; Wood & Bell, 2008).

However, a review of literature found few studies specific to students in the fields of HR professionals, management, and business. One study by Ahmed et al. (2010) did look at this linkage; the study was conducted with 300 seniors attending three public and three private universities in the United States. The results showed that students high in extraversion and/or openness to experience were more likely to utilize the compromising conflict management mode as compared to the avoiding conflict management mode (Ahmed et al., 2010). The authors, however, only examined the two personality styles of extraversion and openness and the two conflict management modes of compromising and avoiding.

This literature review is structured around relevant topics pertaining to this study. The first section of the literature review is on theory. An overview of measurement of personality style and conflict resolution style follows. The literature review then changes focus to address research that has linked personality style to conflict management modes. The sections that end the literature review examine personality style and conflict management modes with regard to HR professionals.

Theoretical Framework

Many differences in personality and behavior are explained by differences in the way individuals perceive the world (Hunt, 1993). Individuals perceive and process information differently, which is the reason for differences in human behavior (Keirsey, 1998). There are numerous theories that pertain to personality style and conflict management which is the topic explored in this study. The first section presents theories as they pertain to personality.

Personality Theories. Personality psychology is the study of the relation between personality and behavior (Aronson, Akert, & Wilson, 1999). Personality explains why individuals tend to behave in a consistent manner in various situations (Hartman, 1999). Personality type theory asserts that there are inherent traits with which individuals are born which consistently affect one's behavior. Personality type theory is rooted in the belief that people have distinct personality traits that are stable (Keirsey, 1998). Personality type theory explains why people are diverse and have inherently different values, stresses, and needs. This theory supports the idea that behavior is determined by inner forces, not outside or environmental factors.

Each person is born with a certain set of traits that affect his/her behavior. Trait theory states a person's behavior in one situation can be predicted in another situation (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010). The main factor that causes differences in people comes from the inner workings of the mind of each individual. Each person has values, strengths, needs, and likes according to their personality trait. People have different attitudes and perceptions due to their traits. Temperament theory asserts that there are inherent traits with which people are born which consistently affect behavior (Keirsey, 1998). Temperament theory is the idea that people have distinct personality traits that do not change (Keirsey, 1998). Temperament theory explains why people are diverse and have inherently different values, stresses, and needs (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Keirsey, 1998). This theory supports the idea that behavior is determined by inner forces not outside or environmental factors.

Furthermore, personality temperament types are the predictable patterns of normal behavior. Preference is the comfortable behavior of a person. Preference is the natural

way a person acts as opposed to behaving in a way that is stressful, tiring, and with effort (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010). Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist who was a *dispositionist*. Carl Jung's model is a major influence on psychological theory. He classified people according to how they functioned and posited that an individual's psychological type determines their perception of the world (Jung, 1971).

There are a variety of personality assessment instruments that measure Carl Jung's psychological types. The True Colors Personality Inventory model is one. It is called The TC Word Cluster Assessment (WCA), and it is used to determine an individual's personality. The Meyers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI), the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, and the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory are other popular instruments that measure Carl Jung's psychological types (MMPI) (Harris, 2000; Miscisin, 2001; Najera-Ketterman, 1997). The most recent model to be accepted into the psychological community is a five-factor model or the "Big 5" theory of personality. (Muchinsky, 2003). This model is rooted in another psychologist's work. Raymond Cattell was a British American psychologist who researched and developed theories about personality and temperament (Muchinsky, 2003). Some researchers have used his personality assessment instrument in their studies of personality. The most common instruments used to measure the "Big 5" are the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) and the NEO PI-R (Five Factor assessment instrument).

Personality Change Studies

Peer reviewed studies of personality and conflict management modes have examined whether an individual's personality changes or is stable throughout their lifetime. This topic is relevant to this study because personality change studies scrutinize

the traditional personality theory that has been discussed and pertains to this research. The theory that pertains to this study and is a driving force behind this study's personality assessment tool says personality does not change. Carl Jung is one of the psychologists that developed the model of personality based on the idea that personality is inherent. Inherent means that an individual is born with certain personality traits (Hunt, 1993). This is part of the nature or nurture debate regarding individuals having biologically determined behavior or life experiences influencing their behavior (Jones, Bernard, & McFalls, 1995). This debate illustrates two schools of thought. The two schools of thought are whether personality and behavior are because of nature and the way we are born or nurture which represents our environment (Jones et al., 1995). Many personality change studies have examined whether there are life events or transitions that cause changes in their personality (Bower, 2012; Helson & Wink, 1992; LeBaron, 2013). These transitional events may include marriage, becoming a parent, becoming an "empty nester", losing a job, and losing a spouse. These events have been debated and researched as to whether they cause personality change.

In order to examine whether an individual's personality changes or is stable throughout their lifetime, longitudinal studies are needed. This is one choice of research design that diverges from this present study. This study takes a "snapshot" of a person's behavior. Thus, it is not a longitudinal study done over a period of time. It looks at an individual's behavior (personality and conflict management) at one moment in time at the point when the participant takes the surveys. On the other hand, the researchers in this area who scrutinize personality change conduct longitudinal studies collecting data over long periods of time (Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging, Berkeley Guidance Study,

or Seattle Longitudinal Study). The researchers have utilized various personality inventories to gather their data (California Psychological Inventory; the Eysenck Personality Inventory; NEO-PI) occasionally combining the data from these instruments with the data from a variety of other instruments (the adjective Checklist; the Coping Scales). Some studies have found that personality is stable throughout one's lifetime while other studies found that personality does change. The results from these studies are mixed. The studies that have found that personality is stable include Allemand, Gomez, and Jackson (2010), Ardel (2006), Kupper, Boomsma, de Geus, Denollet, and Willemsen (2011), and Terracino, McCrae, and Costa (2006).

The studies discussed in this chapter have supporting data that personality can change, and these studies contribute to the present study for a number of reasons. One reason is that the present study surveyed participants of various ages who may be stable at one age and changeable at another age as some studies found. Another reason is that the same participant could answer differently regarding their personality if asked 10 years later. However, this present study is only concerned with how a respondent answered their survey at the time of data collection.

Furthermore, not all the personality change studies provide conclusive evidence that personality does indeed change. The studies that did find supporting data that personality changes include Helson and Wink (1992) and Soto, John, Gosling, and Potter (2011). Lucas and Donellen (2011) had mixed findings reporting both yes and no regarding whether or not personality does change. They found there are different times in one's life when personality is stable and other times when life transitions cause the personality to change. Helson and Wink (1992) did a longitudinal study with women and

found personality changes gradually and tapers off as they pass the age of fifty. Furthermore, there have been a number of studies that found personality is stable until an individual reaches the age of 60. These studies include André et al. (2010) and Schaie and Willis (1991). Some additional studies have looked at other factors that may change personality such as mental illness, medication, or culture. For example, André et al. (2010) found culture affected personality, and Halama and Lačná (2011) reported a change in personality after religious conversion.

Conflict Management Mode (style) Theories. A key motive driving this study is there is evidence that positive outcomes of conflict come from the effective management of it (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011; Deutsch, 1973; Lipsky et al., 2003; Weeks, 1992; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). Furthermore, many peer reviewed studies have devoted attention to what actually causes an individual's preference of conflict management strategy. There has also been research on whether personality style influences conflict management mode. The study of this topic started with Murray (1938) who was one of the first to look for a link between conflict management style and personality style in the workplace. He developed a theory of needs which was published in *Explorations in Personality* (Murray, 1938). This theory presented the concept that human behavior was dictated by an individual's needs.

Follet (1924) was one of the first to label ways of dealing with conflict. She identified the main ways to deal with conflict were domination, compromise, and integration. Deutsch (1973) presented one concern when handling conflict that focused on how cooperative an individual is. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) labeled the two dimensions of conflict handling as assertiveness and cooperativeness, with five styles that

fit into one of the two dimensions. The five styles are avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, compromising, and competing. The Thomas Kilmann model was originally based on a similar model that looked at managerial styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Rahim (1983) developed a model of interpreting conflict management style in the workplace. This instrument is a survey similar to a survey that Thomas and Kilmann developed. The Rahim survey is called the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II). Rahim developed this instrument based on a classification of “conflict handling modes” that has been in use for over 30 years. It was developed based on the two basic dimensions of behavior, namely 1) assertiveness or task-oriented and 2) cooperative or relationship-oriented. Assertiveness, as defined by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), is a dimension of conflict management style. Within the context of Thomas and Kilmann’s conflict management theoretical perspective, assertiveness is defined as working to satisfy oneself and one’s concerns rather than striving to satisfy another’s wants and needs (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Further, cooperation, as defined by Thomas and Kilmann (1974), has been defined as one of the two dimensions of conflict management styles (the other dimension being assertiveness). Cooperation is defined as a person acting in a way that expresses their concern for the relationship (Cooperativeness) or not concerned with the relationship with the other person (Assertiveness/task-oriented). This model has been in use for over 30 years with variations on the title of the two dimensions. The ROCI-II instrument assesses five types of conflict management modes based on the dimensions of task-oriented assertiveness (concern for themselves and not interested in the relationship) and relationship-oriented cooperation (concern for others and interested in the

relationship) (Landau et al., 2001). In other words, the focus is on the relationship (Landau et al., 2001).

Each mode (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding) falls somewhere within one of the two dimensions of cooperativeness and assertiveness (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). The modes that are in the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension are obliging—sometimes called accommodating and integrating and sometimes called collaborating. The modes that are in the task-oriented assertive dimension are avoiding and dominating, sometimes called competing. The compromise mode falls in the center of the grid and cannot be neatly categorized into either dimension of assertive or cooperative (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

The work by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) and later theorists and researchers (e.g., Bowman-Kestner & Ray, 2002; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Rahim, 2011; Somech et al., 2009; Truitt, 1991) has resulted in an understanding and increased insight into the use and effectiveness of specific conflict management modes. Studies have shown that the use of a specific conflict management mode can vary across individuals in response to different conflicts (Katz et al., 2011; Somech et al., 2009; Rahim, 2011; Wood & Bell, 2008). However, many people have been found to prefer one conflict management or conflict resolution mode (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Rahim, 1983).

Furthermore, the use of a specific conflict management mode for a specific situation is more likely to engender a resolution to the conflict (Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). For example, the collaborative mode has been shown to be the most effective in situations where both parties have equal say and the goal is to arrive at a best

solution to a problem (Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Truitt, 1991). In contrast, the compromising conflict management mode is most effective for situations that require a temporary solution and/or when both parties have equally important goals (Bolton, 1979; Rahim, 2011; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Since most individuals tend to use one or two predominant conflict management styles, many people have negative habits of conflict management that they use at work (Bowman-Kestner & Ray, 2002; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). For example, the competing and avoidance conflict management styles can be destructive due to the lack of communication involved in this approach, which can cause increased tension and anxiety between parties (Bolton, 1979; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Rahim, 2011). Furthermore, Murray (1938) said the collaborative style was superior over the other modes, and Fisher and Ury (1991) agreed. Fisher and Ury (1991) presented competitive styles as being not as effective as the collaborative style. This is because they illustrated how the collaborative style leads to a win/win solution. However, many theorists say each style has a value when used strategically. For example, compromise is valuable when there is a lack of time (Truitt, 1991). This is because it is fast and easy to split the item or issue in half so each person gets an equal share.

There are different ways to resolve conflicts, and there are different conflict behaviors. Each way to manage or resolve conflict can produce different results (Truitt, 1991). Bolton (1979) presented three types of conflict behaviors that are called aggressive, avoidant, and assertive. Bolton (1979) explained that assertive people can lead the most fulfilling lives with healthy relationships because being assertive is getting what one wants and needs when negotiating in an un-offensive way. The other two

conflict behaviors can lead to detrimental effects (Bolton, 1979). However, most people are either submissive or aggressive when they negotiate (Bolton, 1979; Fisher & Ury, 1991). Neither the submissive nor the aggressive style leads to satisfying, win/win results (Bolton, 1979; Fisher & Ury, 1991; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). Interest-based negotiation uses the assertive style with a collaborative attitude to get one's needs met while being attentive to the other party's needs (Brodow, 2006; Fisher & Ury, 1991; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007).

Measuring Personality Styles: True Colors (TC) and the TC Word Cluster

Assessment (WCA)

True Colors (TC) is a personality assessment method developed by Lowry in 1979. Lowry (1988) based TC on the writings of Carl Jung, and it is a simplification of Carl Jung's psychological theory (Crews et al., 2010). The TC Word Cluster Assessment (WCA) is simple and easy to use as opposed to the more intricate personality assessments, such as the Meyers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) or the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory (MMPI) (Harris, 2000; Miscisin, 2001; Najera-Ketterman, 1997). The four personality types identified by the WCA are based on four colors that people find easy to remember when compared to remembering the letters in the Myers-Briggs profile (Shapiro, 2013). The colors Orange, Green, Blue, and Yellow each represent certain behavior and attitudes (Shapiro, 2013).

The WCA is used to develop an individual's unique color spectrum that represents an individual's preferred way of thinking, feeling and behaving (Maddron, 2002; Shapiro 2013). The four temperaments that these colors represent in the color spectrum are inquisitive (Green), structured (Gold), adventurous (Orange), and

harmonious (Blue). The WCA immediately provides the quiz-taker with her or his primary color which are the values, strengths, needs, and joys that is most like the person. The WCA also provides the individual's second color as parts of the quiz results. This second color indicates the temperament or descriptive qualities that work in conjunction with her or his primary color to provide a more complete description of a person. For example, the results would say that a person's primary color is Blue working in conjunction with their secondary color of Green (Blue/Green). The WCA results will also determine an individual's palest or weakest color, which describes the qualities, values, and needs that are least like that person.

The WCA has been validated in studies, and it has demonstrated consistency over time (Crews et al., 2010; Honaker, 2001; Whichard, 2006). Two validity studies (Honaker, 2001; Whichard, 2006) were conducted on the WCA. Honaker (2001) researched the validity of the TCI and found it to have a strong convergent validity with the MBTI. Whichard also found the reliability and validity of the WCA in a study with 416 participants from various occupations and educational levels (2006).

Furthermore, Aitch (2011) found students who participated in the TC Basic Awareness workshop, which utilized the WCA, increased their understanding of personality differences. Wilson (2004) found that behavior matched the descriptions of their first and second TC preferences as assessed by the WCA. Honaker (2001) also determined a clear distinction between the TC personality types.

For example, Honaker (2001) found that Blue and Orange personalities were creative and artistic, and also found that Green personalities were logical and analytical.

Measuring Conflict Management Modes: The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II)

There are a number of instruments used to measure conflict management style or mode. The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI-II) is widely used when organizational conflict is examined. The ROCI-II measures preferred conflict management styles (Rahim, 1983) in the workplace. This inventory is valid and reliable and has been used in similar research (Brewer, Mitchell, & Weber, 2002; Rahim, 1983). There are 28 questions on this instrument. The participants must answer on a five-point “likert scale”. The ROCI-II assesses the preferred conflict management mode for the participant that can be one of five styles. The conflict management styles are similar to another one that has been in use for many years called the Thomas Kilmann Instrument (TKI).

The five conflict management styles that are determined by the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory II (ROCI-II) are plotted on a graph with either concern for self or concern for others. This is referred to the two-dimensional model whereas concern for self may be called the assertiveness dimension and concern for others is called the cooperative dimension (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Moore, 2003; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). This concept can be simplified to illustrate more or less concern for the relationship when looking at inter-personal conflict management.

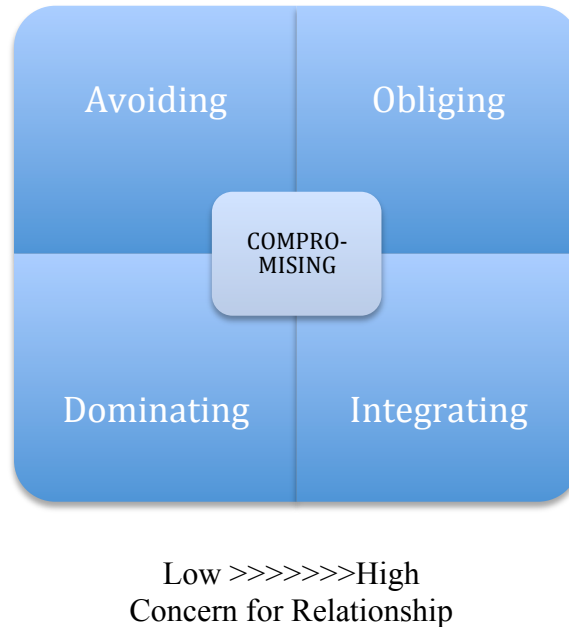


Figure 1. Interpersonal Conflict Management Style Grid.

Compromising is placed in the middle of the grid. It shows equal concern for self and concern for others (Rahim, 1983). The compromiser never totally wins or totally loses. The compromiser gives a little and gets a little when making an agreement. The avoiding style has low concern for self and low concern of others (Rahim, 1983). The avoider does not deal with the conflict and does not try to resolve it. The avoider hopes the conflict will go away if it is ignored. The obliging conflict management style according to Rahim (1983) has low concern for self and a high concern for others. “Obligers” give in to the other person and do not try to get their own needs met. The dominating conflict management style according to Rahim (1983) has high concern for self and low concern for others. This style demonstrates little concern for the other party getting their interests met. The integrating conflict management style according to Rahim (1983) demonstrates that the person has high concern for self and high concern for others.

This integrating style uses collaborative methods to work a conflict out along with the other party.

The ROCI-II was developed from research and derived from an earlier study on managers in the workplace by Murray in 1938. This research in 1938 identified an individual's preferred conflict handling style (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; CPP, Inc., 2008; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). The ROCI-II helps one learn what style they are using too much or too little and understand the effectiveness of their style (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; CPP, Inc., 2008; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). The type of survey can be useful in informing an individual on what a he or she should do in a conflict situation if they want it resolved (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

The ROCI-II identifies five key conflict management modes (Rahim, 1986). These are avoiding, domineering, obliging, integrating, and compromising (Rahim, 1986). The domineering style is a win/lose scenario. This involves highly assertive actions with low cooperation with the other person. This style gets the point across quickly. The domineering conflict management style is used when quick action is needed (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The domineering style can push people away. This is because people may not want to interact with the competitor because they are abrasive. The dominant person gets what they want at the expense of other individuals. It is important for the competitor to understand the conflict outcome when using this style (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). An individual's repeated use of this style often creates resentment and bitterness from the other person because the other person's needs are sacrificed. In the work environment, the competitor does not listen; the

competitor often monopolizes conversations and verbally attacks others (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011).

The obliging style is the opposite of the domineering style (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). This style is highly cooperative and not very assertive (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The other person's needs are put before the obliging person's needs. This style allows one's own needs to be sacrificed so the other person can get their needs met (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). This approach works when a person realizes that they have been wrong. It also helps get things done. Many concerns are put aside when this style is used. In the workplace, the obliger sacrifices, may not scrutinize all decisions, bends the rules, and concentrates on making others happy (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011).

The integrating style is highly assertive and highly cooperative (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The integrating style takes into account everyone's needs (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The integrator listens to all sides (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). This style is not always the best to use: integrating takes time. If time is short, then there needs to be a more domineering style used to get the point across (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The attitude of an integrator is similar to a win/win attitude that satisfies both people's concerns (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Integration meets the objectives and goals of all involved (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Integrating is a complex process. In the workplace the integrator asks many questions, spends time analyzing, and problem solves. Trust, flexibility, and interpersonal skills are needed for this style. This style makes conflict between two people into a mutual problem (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011).

The avoiding style is low on assertiveness and low on cooperativeness (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The problem is not resolved using the avoiding style (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). The problem is not solved because neither person's needs are met. The idea behind this style is that ignoring a problem will make it go away (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). This style is useful to use when a conflict is not important or will go away quickly (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Avoiding can also be a postponing tactic (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Avoiding gives a person time to take a break from trying to resolve a conflict. It is also used when more assertive measures will exacerbate the problem. Avoidance can have detrimental effects since bitterness and resentment can build up on the part of the avoider. This is because the avoider does not get their needs met and can feel taken advantage of. In the workplace, the avoider procrastinates, does not make decisions, does not share all information, misses meetings, and avoids co-workers (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011).

The compromise style is a win-some/lose-some approach to managing a conflict (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). Each side gives a little, and each side gets a little. The goal of this style is to get a little of what you want and give a little of what the other party wants (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011). This is the style of back and forth negotiating. It involves equal levels of cooperation and assertiveness. This approach often leads to quick resolution if both parties have similar goals. The downside of this approach is that one may rush to make decisions without weighing all possibilities while lowering priorities (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011).

Research into the Relationship Between Personality Types and Conflict

Management Modes

There have been numerous quantitative studies (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2010; Chalkidou, 2011; Marion, 1995; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Wang, 2010; Wood & Bell, 2008) that look at the relationship between personality type and conflict management style. However, there is no uniform way to assess either personality type or conflict management mode. The personality assessment tools that are most commonly used include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), and the NEO PI-R (Five Factor assessment instrument). However, the WCA has not been used in these studies. Conflict modes are often measured using the TKI or the ROCI-II. However, there are other conflict management instruments as well. This topic is relevant to the present study because a number of studies are presented that utilize a variety of instruments and methods that have been used to explore whether there is a relationship between personality types and conflict management modes. A review of the various studies that have been done also illustrates how the present study's approach is different. This research design diverges from the other studies in that it is focusing on the two dimensions of conflict management as opposed to the five conflict management modes. This design enabled quantitative statistical analysis to be done in another way when utilizing the two dimensions as categories in which to place the modes. So it does not look at one or two specific modes. Instead the design of this research enables all modes to be incorporated into the analysis.

Contrary to my study and unique design of using the two dimension model (Dual Concern Model), many of the studies covered in this literature review look at the

individual personalities and the individual conflict management modes and do not take into account the two dimensions of conflict management. For example, Whitworth (2005) found no relationship exists between the personality factors of female registered nurses and their preferred method in dealing with conflict. However, other studies did find a relationship (Ahmed et al., 2010; Chalkidou, 2011; Marion, 1995; Thomas & Kilmann, 1975; Wang, 2010; Wood & Bell, 2008).

The hypothesis in the Whitworth study may have been difficult to support since the researcher predicted a narrow finding. Only one personality variable of extroversion was examined with specific predictions that may have limited the study. The population in the Whitworth (2005) study was female registered nurses from Southern Mississippi. The researcher used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the TKI. The study was helpful to the field of conflict resolution even though the hypothesis was not supported. This study was also useful because data was collected regarding the personality types of the population and the conflict styles of those particular personality types. Other studies did have their hypothesis supported. Thomas and Kilmann (1975) researched whether psychology could help explain interpersonal conflict behavior. They used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the TKI to determine if there was a relationship between conflict handling style and Jungian Four-Factor personality style. Graduate students were the participants. There was a relationship found regarding personality traits and conflict management style.

The peer-reviewed research on this topic has mixed results using a variety of survey instruments. Marion (1995) used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to assess personalities and the TKI to assess conflict management modes. Marion looked at senior

administrators in community colleges and found there was a relationship between personality and conflict style. Chalkidou (2011) looked at the conflict styles of unit leaders within studies of recreation, parks, and leisure studies. The researcher used the ROCI-II instrument to measure conflict styles and the NEO-FFI to measure personality. One hundred and five leaders were surveyed, and the results supported the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between conflict management style and personality. Wang (2010) also sought to find out if there was a relationship between the Five-Factor personality traits and conflict management styles in a manufacturing setting. It was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between the Five Factor personalities and conflict management styles. The NEO PI-R was used to measure personality and the ROCI-II was used to measure conflict management style.

The above discussion of research is relevant to my topic because many of these studies are looking for an association between the same two variables in my study but some chose other variables to examine. For example Ahmed et al. (2010) did not look at all the personality traits in the Five-Factor model. The researchers in that study looked at two traits. The two traits were openness to experience and extroversion. Also, the researchers did not look at all five conflict management styles. Instead, Ahmed and colleagues examined the relationship of competing and avoiding with the two chosen personality traits (2010). The participants were final year human resource graduate students. The Ahmed et al. findings indicated that there was a relationship between personality and conflict management style. However, this study was designed differently than my study. Wood and Bell (2008) also chose to examine two dimensions of the Five-Factor theory which is different than the personality model I used. However, they

examined the five conflict handling styles. The participants were introductory psychology students. Wood and Bell (2008) did find a relationship between personality and conflict resolution style.

Interpersonal Conflict in the Workplace

Interpersonal conflict can occur when people with different goals, needs, or values interact (Aronson et al. 1999; Landau et al., 2001). Conflict often erupts when two people interact because their personalities are different (Landau et al., 2001). Furthermore, personality differences often contribute to hidden/underlying interpersonal issues (Landau et al., 2001). One reason for this is different personalities possess different perspectives (Landau et al., 2001; VanSant, 2003). For example, two coworkers may argue about how to maintain a shared workspace. One may need or value the supplies to be labeled, color-coded, and neatly put away which is a Gold need while another worker may value a faster method (Orange need) and randomly pile supplies in the general area of where they belong. Landau and associates (2001) and VanSant (2003) stress the importance in first determining the disputant's differences in personality type when managing conflict. This is important to do in order to find out the hidden interests in individuals as a first step to managing most conflicts (Landau et al., 2001; VanSant, 2003).

People focus on one of two things when in conflict with others (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; CPP, Inc., 2008; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). An individual either pays attention to results (the assertive style) or relationships (the cooperative style) when in conflict with another person (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; CPP, Inc., 2008; Landau et al., 2001; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). The four TC personality types can give insight into

which would be the focus for an individual in conflict. Blue and Green personalities have very specific values and interests that are directly related to what they would pay attention to in conflict. Blues put relationships first before all else. This is because Blue Personality types value and need harmony, relationships, honesty, and emotional support; they want and need to be around people (Lowry, 1989). The Blue personality will always prefer to be with or talk to another person rather than be alone (Lowry, 1989). The Blue personality is what many call “a people-person”—they like to spend time making friends, as well as caring and nurturing relationships (Lowry, 1989). This would indicate the Blue personality is interested in being cooperative and focuses on relationships.

Moreover, Green personality types value and need to analyze, hear explanations, gather information, and research. They value logic and need to understand (Lowry, 1989). Green personalities enjoy learning and problem-solving (Lowry, 1989). Green personalities also prefer to spend their time around data and information rather than around people and socializing (Lowry, 1989). Green personalities do not value relationships as much as they value data, information, and problem-solving (Lowry, 1989). This would indicate that Green personalities do not have relationships as their main priority. They focus on results. Gold Personality types value and need tradition, organization, predictability, planning, schedules, and lists. The Gold personality needs order and clarity (Lowry, 1989). On the other hand, Orange personality types value and need spontaneity, challenge, risk-taking, as well as hands-on and active activities (Lowry, 1989). They also need freedom (Lowry, 1989). This personality type may react quickly, be competitive, and focus on only the outcome of the conflict situation which is an assertive style.

Studies Regarding Conflict Management Mode

This topic is relevant to the present study because the purpose of the present study is to be used to inform students in HR and conflict resolution curriculum. This present study utilizes a personality assessment instrument in a new way. The WCA has never been used in conjunction with a conflict management mode instrument. The studies that have been done on the subject of personality style and conflict resolution have used the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument while looking at the Big Five Traits or Myers-Briggs personality types. Furthermore, this study can be contrasted, with the other studies regarding the same topic, by looking at how the results were handled regarding conflict management mode. The conflict management modes in the present study were uniquely organized into the two dimensions of task-orientation assertiveness or relationship-orientation cooperativeness.

There is a limited amount of research regarding the relationship between personality and conflict management modes. There have been a number of studies that looked at conflict modes and personality in different settings. Some of these studies have also looked at other variables such as gender, educational level, and work experience. These other variables were included in the data that was collected in the demographic section of my survey. There are a variety of instruments to use to assess personality and conflict management style and studies that have been done have utilized a variety of these instruments. True Colors personality model has not been used in any studies in regards to conflict management style while a variety of other models have been used to assess personality (the Myers-Briggs assessment or the Big Five personality model).

Thus, these studies are not uniform in their methodology, design, or results even though they are looking for a relationship between the same two variables. The researchers have found an association between personality and conflict management mode in many of these studies. This study is novel in its use of the True Colors model of personality categorization. There is a lack of studies regarding the relationship of the True Colors Personality model and conflict management modes or the conflict management dimensions. There are studies that exemplify this point of using a variety of instruments and the lack of WCA use. Three studies that exemplify this point are Ahmed et al. (2010), Forrester and Tashchian (2013), and Wood and Bell (2008).

Ahmed et al. (2010) examined the relationship between personality and conflict management style of final year students entering the workforce. The Big Five personality model was used, and there was a relationship found to be existent between personality and conflict management style. Interesting to note is the difference in this study with the present study. Most significant is the context of the questions. The context of the questions in Ahmed et al. (2010) were presented to a person before having working experience and the present study surveys individuals with upper level working experience. Thus, the findings of this Ahmed et al. (2010) study are different than the findings of the present study where the respondents have been working for a while. Forrester and Tashchian (2013) also analyzed the relationship between personality and conflict management modes. The researchers used the NEO–FFI to determine personality and the ROCI–II to determine conflict management mode. This study was conducted over a longer period of time than most other studies on this topic. The data was collected from students over a four-semester time period as opposed to the data being collected as a

“snapshot” in time. The data collected by Forrester and Tashchian (2013) supported a relationship between the Big Five personality traits and conflict management mode which is similar to the research done by Ahmed et al. (2010).

However, the Forrester and Tashchian (2013) sample was comprised of students who have not yet joined the workforce full-time. This detail also distinguishes the study from the others including my study. Relevant to this topic is the discussion contained within the study regarding the fact that education about personality and its influence on conflict management style helps people be more tolerant of others. The researchers posited that this is because when links are identified between personality style and conflict management style, students are better able to see patterns of behavior and anticipate behavior. This can lead to a more positive attitude when involved in interpersonal conflict. Additionally, Wood and Bell (2008) explored the relationship between personality and conflict management mode. They specifically looked at mediation and negotiation situations. The instruments used were the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) that assessed personality and the Rosenthal-Hautaluoma Instrument to measure conflict management styles. This research found the Big Five personalities did predict conflict management style. The Big Five Traits model uses the terms openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010).

There are numerous other studies that use a variety of conflict management assessment instruments and explore other variables that may have a relationship with conflict management style or explore the effect an individual's conflict management style may have on others. There are three studies that exemplify this point namely, Brockman

et al. (2010), Ogunyemi et al. (2010), and Volkema and Fleck (2012). The other variables that are examined in these studies pertain to the purpose of my study, that is, the need for conflict management training to be done and to have a more comprehensive curriculum. The more comprehensive curriculum would include information on personality and conflict management modes and dimensions.

Brockman et al. (2010) conducted a longer study than the others that took place over three years. The researchers used the TKI instrument and the Organization Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) in conjunction with conflict resolution workshops. The findings revealed that the conflict resolution workshops had an effect on the conflict management styles of the participants. This study is different than my study because they used different assessment instruments and conducted a longitudinal study. However, it is relevant because the respondents showed a change in their conflict management style. The preferred style after the workshops was collaborating, and resolving disputes with superiors was the context of the study. Utilizing the collaborating method is superior as long as the individuals who are in dispute have the time and interest in discussing the matter. The participants in my study may not discuss all conflicts. Therefore, this study leads to the ongoing discussion regarding when and how to manage interpersonal conflict.

Ogunyemi et al. (2011) also conducted a longitudinal study which is different than my study. Conflict management style was examined to consider if it affects how a student is evaluated by a faculty member. The TKI assessment instrument was used, and the avoiding conflict management mode was most preferred by the participants. The data revealed conflict management style predicted performance evaluations. The participants

who competed were not highly favored while the collaborators were given better evaluations by faculty. This topic is relevant to my study because it lends itself to the ongoing discussion regarding the variety of conflict modes to be used for more positive outcomes depending on the situation. HR professionals in my study perform a number of functions and not everyone requires the same approach. Volkema and Fleck's (2012) research is relevant to my study because the researchers found a relationship between personality style and negotiating style. This study examined whether there was a relationship between culture and personality in regards to assertiveness when an individual is involved in negotiation. The Machiavellian personality test (MACH IV) and the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule Instrument was used in that study to collect data. The results revealed personality affects negotiation style. The details of this study are significant because some of the participants are from outside the United States, they are taking business courses and preparing to be managers, and an uncommon personality test was used to collect the data.

Further, my study also uses a fairly uncommon personality assessment instrument. The variety of instruments selected for use is an important detail of research design that needed to be examined in order to continue researching the area of personality and conflict management behavior. This is because the results of the body of research may conflict at times due to the intricate details of each research design, method, and instrument used. For example the ROCI-II that is used in my study only asks questions pertaining to workplace behavior, whereas the TKI asks questions that can be interpreted within the context of general life situations.

Gender: Conflict Management Mode and Behavior

The topic of gender is relevant to the present research because gender data was collected for my study as demographic information. However, my study did not separate out the data from the women and compare it to the data from the men. There have been numerous studies over the years that looked at males and females as separate groups. These studies explore the relation between gender and conflict behavior. However, these studies have not presented conclusive evidence of whether gender has a direct relationship to conflict management style. There is a lack of strong evidence of a relationship between gender and conflict management style. There have been contrasting results among the studies that have been done over the years (Brusko, 2010).

Studies that examine gender behavior have found men to be dominating, aggressive, or competing (Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Brewer et al., 2002; Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004; Rosenthal & Hautaluoma, 1988). Males were also found to be accommodating (Cetin & Hacifazlioglu, 2004) and avoidant (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). Females have been found in studies to be accommodating (Rosenthal & Hautaluoma, 1988), compromising, cooperative, and collaborative (Baxter & Shepherd, 1978, Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008), and avoidant (Brewer et al., 2002). Portello and Long (1994) highlighted the fact that women can have male, female, or both traits. This study found females use the dominating style when they have masculine, instrumental traits, and females use compromising, avoidant, or obliging style when they have feminine, expressive traits (Portello & Long, 1994).

The words “men” and “women” or “female” or “male” are labels for groups of people and support the gendered expectations and ideas of behavior. However, in reality

these labels do not represent homogenous groups (Wood, 2007). All males do not act the same, and all females do not act the same (Wood, 2007). Females differ from each other as men differ from each other. Women are said to be sensitive and caring, which are traits of a Blue personality style. However, all women are not Blue personalities.

On the other hand, men are said to be competitive and goal-oriented. This could be either Gold or Orange personality depending on whether the goal is systematically pursued (Gold) or action-oriented (Orange). However, all men are not Gold or Orange personalities. Furthermore, there are men who are sensitive and caring and harmony-oriented (Blue traits) while there are women who are competitive and goal-oriented (Gold or Orange traits). Regardless of the results of these cited studies and the aforementioned statements, conflict behavior has been classified as masculine or feminine based on traditional gender roles. Masculine conflict management behavior is identified as being more interested in self than the other (Wood, 2007). Wood describes this behavior as either “issuing ultimatums, refusing to listen or discuss, assert that the other party is exaggerating or too emotional” (2007, p. 203). On the other hand, feminine conflict behavior is interpreted using strategies that reduce tension (Wood, 2007). These strategies can include obliging, compromising, and talking about feelings and needs to “maintain equality and build relationships” (Wood, 2007, p. 203).

Gender is a variable that is often examined when discussing conflict management styles. There are two studies that exemplify this point, and they are Brahnam, Marfazio, Hignit, Barrier, and Chin (2005) and Brusko (2010). Brahnam et al. (2005) looked at conflict resolution attitudes by both genders of students. The purpose of Brahnam et al.’s research was to identify the styles of conflict management of the emerging generation of

Information Systems (IS) professionals (2005). This study was also conducted in order to explore if there is a relationship between gender and conflict management style. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was used to determine the conflict resolution modes. The results indicated that gender does affect conflict management style. Women were found to use the more collaborative approach to conflict management; men were found to be more conflict avoidant. The conclusion of this study revealed women used a superior method of conflict resolution than men since the researchers posited that collaboration is more productive than avoidance. Collaboration was determined the superior method of conflict resolution because it involves trust and communication, and was empowering to both parties (Brahnam et al., 2005). The data also supported the idea that IS female professionals who were newer to their position than the men may manage conflict more effectively. The researchers posited this was because the focus of collaborators (female in this study) is on developing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships.

Brusko (2010) conducted a study that looked at conflict management in the organizational setting. It was similar to my study but was also different because it included status and gender as variables. The participants were both students and non-students. This was a quantitative study that used a survey which collected data on demographics, work experience, and organizational status. The ROCI-II instrument was used to survey the conflict management styles of the participants, and the BSRI survey was used to determine each respondent's gender role. The participants held full-time positions in an organization with multiple levels of management. The results indicated status in an organization was not found to be an influence on gender and conflict

management strategy. However, the data supported a relationship between gender and conflict management strategy. This finding is in contrast to the approach in my study where men and women were treated as one group. This study could support the need to duplicate my study but separate the males and females for further research.

Human Resource (HR) Professionals: Personality Style and Conflict Management

Mode

This topic is relevant to my research because working in the HR field will require HR professionals to work efficiently with different personalities. HR professionals or HR managers must first understand themselves before they can effectively help in the management of conflict around them (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; DelCampo, 2011; Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). HR managers or HR professionals, like all individuals, have personality styles, triggers, and conflict behaviors that will affect their attempts to set the tone for office conflict management processes as well as the enforcement of policies and rules for the organization. The expanding conflict management role of the HR professional includes: disciplining employees, designing and enforcing organizational policies and procedures, and discussing employee concerns and complaints (Armstrong, 2010; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Delpo & Guerin, 2005; Messmer, 1999; Shepard, 2005; Smith, 1996; Truitt, 1991). HR managers may also mediate disputes (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Delpo & Guerin, 2005; Messmer, 1999; Shepard, 2005; Smith, 1996; Truitt, 1991). Understanding personality and conflict management styles can be extremely helpful in the HR field as HR professionals interact with a diverse group of employees.

“Your business will only be as good as your employees” (DelPo & Guerin, 2005, p.5). This statement reflects the importance of the HR professional’s job. They often work with a company’s workforce. They are responsible for hiring, training, assessing, rewarding, disciplining, and firing employees. HR managers also write and enforce company policy regarding employees (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010). The HR role is evolving (Becker, Huselid, & Ulrich, 2001; Lipsky et al., 2003; Parker, 2013; Ulrich, 1997). Prior to 1960, the personnel department was the location of staff that dealt with payroll, hiring, and employee benefits (Lipsky et al., 2003). Today, HR professionals still have many of the responsibilities of a personnel department (Carpenter, 2012). In many organizations, that department has expanded over the last few decades and changed into the HR department (Lipsky et al., 2003).

This change from personnel management to HR management has elevated the status of the people who hold these positions (Lipsky et al., 2003). HR professionals now strategize ways to improve organizational success (Becker et al., 2001). HR managers are often considered professionals and may have college and graduate degrees. There are various functions of HR managers. The main reason for the HR department is to help maintain or improve employee productivity (Becker et al., 2001; Ulrich, 1997). Another function of the HR department is to give incentives to employees to motivate them (Becker et al., 2001). Additional functions of HR include providing compensation, recruiting, hiring and firing, performance appraisal, monitoring employee job satisfaction, safety, developing and enforcing policies and procedures, training, and ensuring company rules and policies are followed (Messmer, 1999) while managing employee conflicts (Guttman, 2009).

Many organizations understand the need for HR managers and HR professionals to help with employee issues (Lipsky et al., 2003; Parker, 2013) in addition to establishing policies and practices (Parker, 2013) and motivating the workforce to increase productivity and profitability. The HR manager plays an important part of organizational success (Becker et al., 2001; Ulrich, 1997). Researcher Carpenter (2012) found motivating employees as a priority for organizations. Managing change was found to also be valued (Carpenter 2012). This is because employee work productivity contributes greatly to organizational success (Becker et al., 2001; Ulrich, 1997).

Problem Employees and Employee Problems

Negative behavior in the workplace is distracting and a challenge to the HR manager's job. Dealing with both problem employees and employee problems can lead to lawsuits or violence if they are mismanaged (Guerin & DelPo, 2005). Furthermore, HR managers need to have conflict management behavior or skills that include active listening and assertion (Guttman, 2009), but they also may need to change their behavior and be more assertive or even aggressive in order to enforce policies. These are different ways of dealing with problems that conflict with one another. However, each approach may be needed depending on the situation (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Truitt, 1991). Researcher Wilson (2010) found 21% or one in five employees say they have frequent experiences with workplace conflict. However, researcher Cowan (2009) found organizational policies are not always clear. Furthermore, Cowan (2009) found disciplining employees is challenging. Liu (2010) conducted a survey regarding bullying at work and found that 61% of the women witnessed bullying or had been bullied. The study also found management had not helped but harmed the situation or was the cause.

Liu (2012) also found HR managers sometimes too the side of the bullier. Liu also found that management and HR find it hard to know how to deal with bullying. It was found that many ignore, smile, or do not say anything (Liu, 2012). However, the study found the most successful conflict management method is competing or dominating, clearly indicating that bullying is not allowed (Liu, 2012).

There are various ways for HR managers to deal with problem employees and employee problems. An employee handbook is the first step in having enforceable policies that stop negative behavior in the workplace. If the handbook is clearly written, it eliminates questions and ambiguity and provides legal protection (Guerin & DelPo, 2005). It legally protects the organizations because it justifies disciplinary action (Guerin & DelPo, 2005). Workplace behavioral policies that are often made by the HR department and sometimes made by managers outline the standards and rules of conduct in the workplace.

The employee handbook outlines procedures for handling problem employees and employee problems that include performance evaluations, progressive discipline, complaint investigations, mediation, or employment termination. The policies can also cover professional conduct, punctuality and attendance, dress, grooming, personal hygiene, pranks and practical jokes, threatening language, bullying, sexual harassment, abusive language, horseplay, fighting, violence, drugs and alcohol, theft, dishonesty, sleeping on the job, and insubordination (Guerin & DelPo, 2005). DelCampo (2011) outlines a model of managing employee problems. This model has five steps which includes “looking at the situation from both sides, examining the facts, determining the

best strategy to handle situation, confronting the employee and discussing, and taking appropriate action” (DelCampo, 2011, p. 165).

Carpenter (2012) examined the problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of HR managers. Sixty-seven HR managers were surveyed online, and it was found that strategic management and negotiation abilities were very important (Carpenter 2012). Researcher Wilson (2010) looked at relationships among workplace aggression, organizational justice, and intention to leave among U.S. telecommunication workers. The researcher said workplace aggression negatively affects the organization’s social environment (Wilson, 2010).

Research Question

RQ1. Is there a relationship between primary personality style, as measured by the WCA, and the two dimensions of conflict management (CM) modes of task-oriented assertive or relationship-oriented cooperative, as measured by the ROCI–II, among HR professionals?

The research question and eight hypotheses determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between an individual with the primary True Colors personality type and their preferred conflict management dimension in the workplace. The independent variables in this study are each personality type examined separately from the other three True Colors personalities. The dependent variables in this study are the two conflict management dimensions that are also treated independent of each other. All four True Colors personalities and each conflict management dimension are examined in each one of the hypotheses. The purpose of this research is to increase awareness as to why an individual prefers to behave a certain way in workplace conflict.

A direct connection between preferred personality type and preferred conflict management dimension would be an important finding. It would be an important finding because it may be more advantageous for an individual to utilize each dimension depending on circumstance and outcome as opposed to preference and regardless of their personality. For example, Thomas and Kilmann (1974) state the collaborating mode is good to use when you have time to talk to the other person about all the issues and needs. However, the dominating mode is good to use when enforcing rules (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Hypotheses

H₀₁. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

H_{a1}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

This first hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Blue personality and the cooperative conflict management dimension. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Blue personality prefers the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the

individual will focus on relationship and harmony when managing conflict. There appears to be an obvious correlation here because Blue personalities value harmony and relationships. This may be obvious, but it needs to be statistically tested. First, according to the design of this study, the survey asked the HR professional with the Blue personality to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Blue personality and their conflict management style as compared with the other personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

H₀₂. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

H_{a2}. HR professionals with primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with the personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

This second hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Gold personality and the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Gold personality prefers the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension. This conflict management

preference indicates that the individual will focus on relationship and harmony when managing conflict. Gold personalities value structure, organization, predictability, and rules. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Gold personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior at work. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Gold personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Gold personality and their conflict management style as compared with the other personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

H₀₃. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

H_{a3}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

This third hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Green personality and the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on task, the

results, or job when managing conflict. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Green personality prefers to behave in the task-oriented assertive dimension. Green personalities value structure, organization, predictability, and rules. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Green personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior at work. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Green personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Green personality and their conflict management style as compared with the other personality styles.

H₀₄. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

H_{a4}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

This fourth hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Orange personality and the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on task, the

results, or job when managing conflict. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Orange personality prefers to behave in the task-oriented assertive dimension. Orange personalities value structure, organization, predictability, and rules. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Orange personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior at work. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Orange personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Orange personality and their conflict management style as compared with the other personality styles.

H₀₅. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

H_{a5}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

This fifth hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Blue personality and the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on task, the

results, or job when managing conflict. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Blue personality prefers to behave in the task-oriented assertive dimension. Blue personalities value structure, organization, predictability, and rules. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Blue personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior in the workplace. This was investigated through administering the ROCI–II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Blue personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Blue personality and their conflict management dimension as compared with the other personality styles.

H₀₆. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI–II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

H_{a6}. HR professionals with primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI–II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

This sixth hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Gold personality and the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on task, the

results, or job when managing conflict. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Gold personality prefers to behave in the task-oriented assertive dimension. Gold personalities value structure, organization, predictability, and rules. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Gold personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Gold personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Gold personality and their conflict management dimension as compared with the other personality styles.

H₀₇. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

H_{a7}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict, management dimension as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

This seventh hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Green personality and the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Green personality prefers the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on relationship and harmony when managing conflict. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Green personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Green personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Green personality and their conflict management dimension as compared with the other personality styles of Orange, Gold, or Blue.

H₀₈. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

H_{a8}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as

compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

This eighth hypothesis was to determine whether there is a correlation between the Orange personality and the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension. The goal in researching this is to examine whether the Orange personality prefers the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension. This conflict management preference indicates that the individual will focus on relationship and harmony when managing conflict. This study examines behavior at work so investigating whether the Orange personality focuses on relationship-oriented actions will provide insight into their conflict behavior in the workplace. This was investigated through administering the ROCI-II survey to determine conflict management style and then statistically testing the results. First, the HR professional with the Orange personality was asked to indicate their conflict management style within the context of performing their HR job function. Second, chi-square statistical testing was done to see if there is a correlation between the Orange personality and their conflict management style as compared with the other personality styles of Green, Gold, or Blue.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This is a quantitative study utilizing statistical analysis to answer the research question and test the hypotheses. The research question asks whether there is a relationship between an individual's primary personality style, as measured by the WCA, and the two dimensions of conflict management (CM) modes of task-oriented assertive or relationship-oriented cooperative, as measured by the ROCI-II, among HR professionals. Data analysis was conducted on data that were collected from an electronic survey containing demographic questions and two instruments (WCA and ROCI-II). The survey was administered to respondents who met the inclusion criteria (HR professionals who are not in entry level positions, located in the United States, male or female). The survey enabled the researcher to investigate the research question since it provided a way to gather quantitative data (Druckman, 2005) regarding demographic information, personalities, and conflict management modes and their dimensions for a sample of the population.

The objective of this study was to analyze survey responses that were collected from HR professionals. This research examined the relationship between the four dominant personality styles of TC (Lowry, 1989) and the two dimensions of conflict management modes as measured by the ROCI-II (Rahim, 2011) in HR professionals. In this quantitative research study, the researcher statistically analyzed the results of the WCA together with the results of the ROCI-II. This study organized the data of ROCI-II into two categories that were the two dimensions of conflict management. The two dimensions are relationship-oriented cooperative (C) and task-oriented assertive (A). The

two categories were based on the two-dimensional model of conflict management (Jones & Brinkert, 2008; Katz et al., 2011; Moore, 2003; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). This study tested all color personalities on the two dimensions of conflict management as determined by ROCI-II.

The independent variable for this study is dominant personality style. This was chosen as independent because personality trait is considered consistent and it is not going to change. Personality style is a cognitive trait-based factor based on one's temperament and is viewed among psychologists and sociologists unchanging (Ardelt, 2000; Costa & McCrae, 1994; John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008; Wilks, 2009). This variable is a dichotomous coded variable, wherein Gold or not Gold, Blue or not Blue, Orange or not Orange, and Green or not Green.

The dependent variable for this study is conflict management mode (CMM) that is then categorized into a conflict management dimension (C or A). This variable is a dichotomous coded variable because the variable is relationship-oriented cooperative or not relationship-oriented cooperative, task-oriented assertive or not task-oriented assertive.

The dependent variable for this study is conflict management mode/dimension because theorists and researchers have posited that conflict management style is a mutable construct that can be influenced by the age, developmental stage, cognitive ability, and personality of the individual and can change according to differing contexts and situations (Balliet, 2010; Donohue & Kolt, 1992; Ransbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011).

Table 1

Variables for the Research Question

Independent Variable	Personality Traits Blue (BL) Green (GR) Gold (GO) Orange (OR)
Dependent Variable	Workplace Conflict Management Mode Relationship-oriented C Dimension (C): Integrating Obliging Task-oriented A Dimension (A): Avoiding Dominating

The four personality styles of TC are Organized (Gold), Analytical, problem solver (Green), Action-oriented (Orange), and Harmonious, people-person (Blue). The two dimensions of the ROCI-II are task-oriented assertiveness and relationship-oriented cooperativeness (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; CPP, Inc., 2008; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007). The conflict modes that are categorized in the relationship-oriented cooperativeness dimension (C) are Integrating style (IS) and Obliging style (OS). The conflict modes that are categorized in the task-oriented assertive dimension (A) are Avoiding style (AS) and Dominating style (DS). The Compromising style was not included in the study since it cannot be categorized into either the A or C dimension. The findings examined if the dominant personality of an individual has a relationship with the conflict management dimension of task-oriented assertiveness or relationship-oriented cooperativeness. Significant associations were examined through statistical analyses in order to use personality as a tool in predicting conflict management dimension in workplace conflict situations for HR professionals.

Sample Collection

Unit of Analysis. The unit of analysis is the individual. These are HR professionals who may be consulted with, may counsel, manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. The unit of analysis is well-suited for this study because the researcher is exploring the individual's self-reported knowledge of their own behavior and their own use of conflict management styles.

Population. The population for this study consisted of all HR professionals in the United States but the accessible sample were respondents of the electronic survey. These individuals in the population had various levels of working experience and education in the HR field, they were both male and female, came from a variety of races, supervise or do not supervise employees as one of their job functions, and may or may not have had knowledge and training in the CR skillset.

Sample. The sample size is 172 ($n = 172$). There were 37 dominant Blue personalities, 44 dominant Gold Personalities, 84 dominant Green personalities, and seven dominant Orange personalities. Some respondents' data were removed due to inadequate information. Some findings contained ties between the scores for dominant personality. Any respondent who was tied was put into both personality groups. They were attributed to each group individually because the instrument determined both personalities to be dominant for that individual. For each color this researcher averaged the two C (relationship-oriented cooperative dimension) values and to get one C value for that color. That was also done for the two A (task-oriented assertive dimension) values to get one A value for that color.

The individuals in the sample had various levels of working experience and education in the HR field, they were both male and female, came from a variety of races, supervise or do not supervise employees as one of their job functions, and may or may not have had knowledge and training in the CR skillset.

Data Collection Method (Instruments)

The Word Cluster Assessment (WCA) was used to assess personality style. The WCA is reliable and valid (Honaker, 2001; Whichard, 2006). The results determined the individual's personality spectrum that is comprised of four personality styles of the TC model. These personalities are Gold (organized), Green (analytical), Orange (action-oriented), and Blue (harmonious). The instrument takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. The instrument is called a "word cluster" where participants are asked to rank four sets of personality behaviors in order of "most like you" to "least like you". This is a self-assessment instrument with six questions. A five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. The respondent was asked to rate four groups of words in each question. The higher number that a respondent chooses indicates how much they agree the word or how much the word is like them. The original instrument used clusters of words that sometimes overlapped in meaning with each other. In this study, the groups of words were replaced by one word in order to enhance clarity and focus on the one word. Focusing on one word ensured that the respondent compared that one word to the other three distinctly different words in order to more accurately answer each question.

The ROCI-II is known to be valid and reliable (Rahim, 2001). The ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983) is an assessment tool that has a long psychometric history and has been used for almost forty years to assess individual's conflict management modes or styles.

The five conflict management modes of the ROCI-II, which can be categorized into two dimensions of task-oriented assertiveness and relationship-oriented cooperativeness, are dominating, integrating, compromising, avoiding, and obliging. This is a self-assessment instrument with 28 questions that asks questions about interpersonal behavior in the workplace. A five-point scale is used to collect and assess the data. The higher number that a respondent chooses indicates how much they agree with the statement presented regarding conflict handling behavior. This instrument measures conflict behavior in the workplace. The original instrument measured conflict between the respondent and a subordinate. However, in this study, the word “subordinate” was replaced by the word “employee” in order to accurately portray the person with whom the HR professional would be interacting in the proposed situation for each question.

The WCA, the ROCI-II, and demographic questions were placed together in one document to form a survey that was taken individually by each participant on a computer. Each respondent self-reported the personality characteristics and conflict behaviors that they felt described them. The researcher used SurveyMonkey as a tool to technologically distribute the survey instruments and technologically collect the data. SurveyMonkey is an online survey software company. It assisted the researcher in the distribution of survey questions and the collection of the responses via the Internet and obtains quick responses while gathering the data in one location. The survey was administered after all the participants were given a letter of recruitment. The letter of recruitment served to inform the participants of the research, that their identities are anonymous, and that their participation was voluntary. All participants were anonymous to the researcher. The researcher did not have any contact with the participants nor did

she know the identity of any of the participants. The data collection did not allow for missing data because a participant was not be able to leave a page that was displayed on the computer screen until all the questions that needed to be answered were answered. Participants could choose not to answer a question by marking a choice that states: “prefer not to answer”.

Demographic data was also collected by this survey. Demographic questions asked about the respondent’s age group, salary level, work experience, level of education, race, gender, whether the respondent supervised or managed others, and knowledge of the CR skillset. These demographic variables are included for descriptive purposes only. The CR skillset is a set of skills and training pertaining to conflict management practice. The questions regarding the CR skillset asked whether respondent ever learned about CR or CM and/or used specific CR functions at work (such as, mediation), and if respondent had a desire to learn specific CR skills for work (such as, reflective listening, reframing and problem-solving methods). Participants were asked these questions regarding knowledge and education of the CR skillset in order to better inform the researcher and contribute to the CR and HR field.

Each participant had individual online access to the research survey. The answers to both surveys were linked because the participants were asked to answer all questions together at one time. The sample of HR professionals self-reported the data by completing one survey document which contained three sections of questions. The three sections contained demographic questions, the WCA, and the ROCI-II in one survey online and sent to SurveyMonkey to administer on behalf of the researcher. The survey had approximately 31 questions. The participants self-reported the data after

SurveyMonkey contacted the individuals and gave them a letter explaining the study, after which participants indicated agreement to participate in the study. The informed consent form served to inform the participants of the research and that their identities are anonymous, there were no foreseeable risks for their participation, there were no benefits to them as survey respondents, their participation was voluntary, and they could remove themselves from the study at any time.

Table 2

Data Collection Instruments and Data Measured

Instrument	Data Measured
Demographic Questions	Age CR skillset CR Education Education Ethnicity Gender Job roles (relating to CR) Salary Supervise
WCA (Lowry, 1978)	Blue personality Green personality Gold personality Orange personality
ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983)	Relationship – oriented C Dimension (C) Integrating Mode Obliging Mode Task – oriented A Dimension (A) Avoiding Mode Dominating Mode

* Compromising mode data was not collected. Compromising mode does not fall within research inquiry design (it is neither C nor A dimension).

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation

Introduction

The results of this study are presented in this chapter. First, there is a discussion of the analytical approach and composition of the data. An explanation of the analysis of the hypothesis and explanation of how the research question was answered is presented next in this chapter. It is followed by the presentation and discussion of descriptive attributes regarding the demographic questions.

Analytical Approach and Composition of Data

The researcher conducted a survey (ROCI-II) that revealed what conflict management mode (CMM) each respondent used when interacting with employees in the workplace. Each respondent had four scores from taking this survey. The scores were presented in a numerical order with the highest number being the respondent's dominant CMM. Two scores for the ROCI-II fit into the A-CM dimension (Avoidant and Dominant) and two were fit into the C-CM dimension (Integrating and Accommodating). The researcher averaged the two A scores to get one A score for each respondent. Then the two C scores were averaged to get one C score for each respondent. Each respondent ended up with one A score indicating their preference for an A-CM dimension and one C score indicating their preference for a C-CM dimension after these preliminary calculations. Each respondent also ended up with one dominant personality score (Blue, Gold, Green, or Orange). The dominant personality score of each respondent was based on the results of the WCA survey. Each respondent had four scores from that survey. The scores were presented in a numerical order with the highest number being the respondent's dominant personality.

Statistical/Analytical Approach

With respect to the analyses conducted, initially, a series of descriptive statistics were conducted on these data in order to describe the respondents as well as the data analyzed for this study. This consisted of a series of bar graphs in order to illustrate the distribution of the demographic and related measures incorporated within the questionnaire used, as well as a frequency table reporting the sample sizes and percentages of response relating to personality styles as well as conflict management mode dimensions. This was followed by a series of chi-square analyses that served to test the hypotheses incorporated within the study. All hypotheses focused upon the association between specific personality styles and specific conflict management mode dimensions of assertive or cooperative, and for this reason the chi-square test was appropriate as this focuses upon the association between two categorical measures. Additionally, cross-tabulation tables were also presented here in order to illustrate in further detail the association between the measures in question.

Descriptive Statistics, Analysis of Hypotheses, and Analysis of Research Question

Initially, a series of descriptive statistics were conducted on this data in order to better describe this sample and the data analyzed in this study. First, a series of bar charts were constructed in order to illustrate the distribution of respondents on the basis of the demographic and related measures included within this study. The following figure presents responses relating to the race/ethnicity of respondents. As shown, the vast majority of respondents, over 80% of the sample, were found to be white, with close to 10% being Hispanic/Latino, and small percentages of Asians, blacks, multiracial or multiethnic individuals, Native Americans, and individuals of other race.

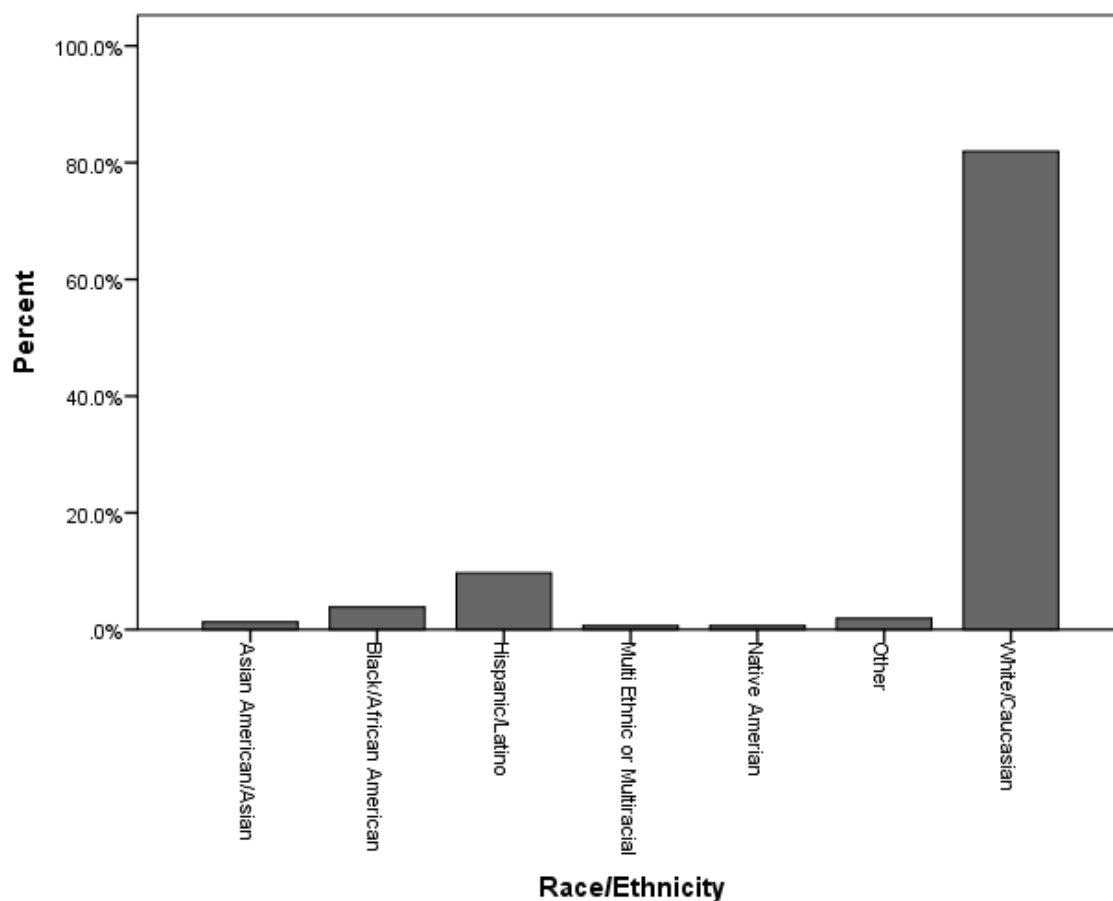


Figure 2. Respondent Race/Ethnicity.

Next, the following figure presents the distribution of respondents on the basis of their salary before taxes. Most commonly, slightly over 40% of the sample had an annual income of \$49,000 or less per year, with approximately 35% having a salary between \$50,000 to just under \$100,000 per year, and approximately 20% having a salary of over \$100,000 per year.

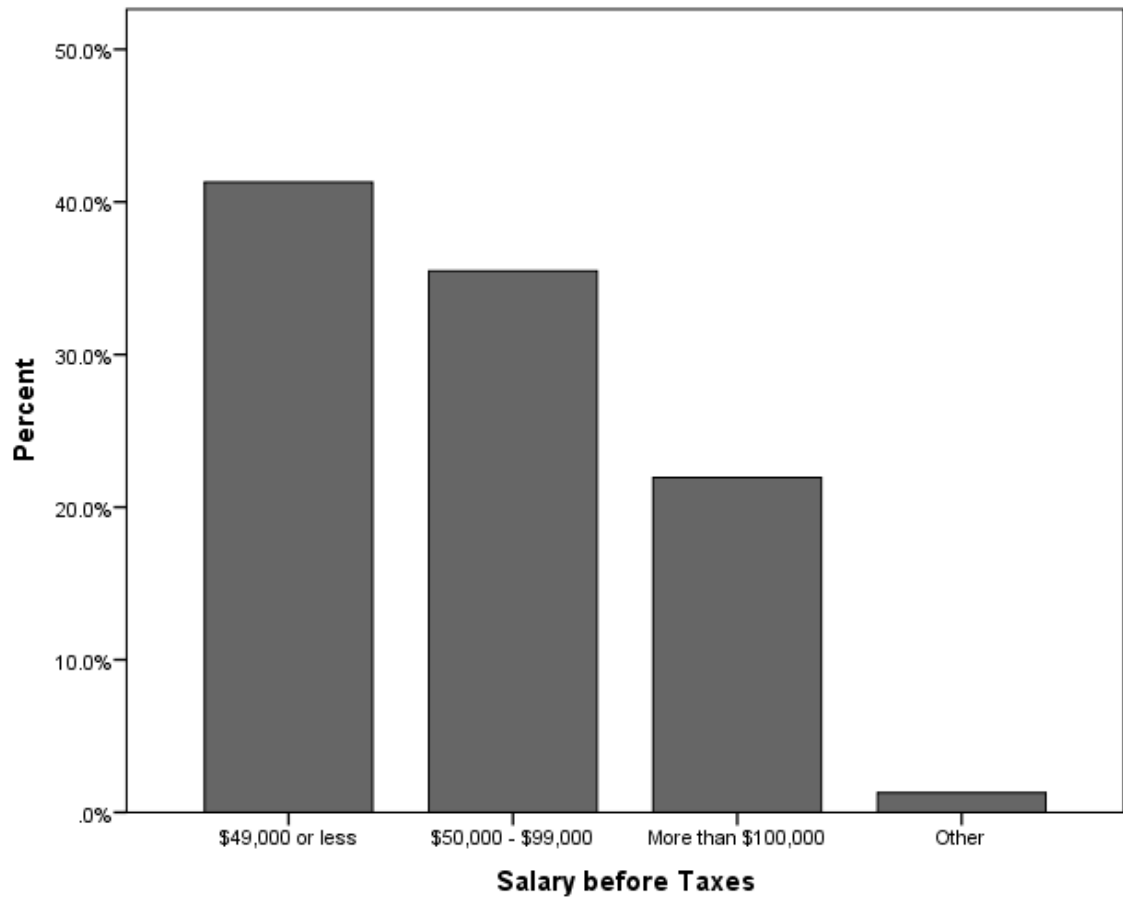


Figure 3. Respondent Salary before Taxes.

Following this, respondents were asked whether they supervise or manage others. As shown in the following figure, over 60% of the sample was found to supervise or manage others, with under 40% replying in the negative.

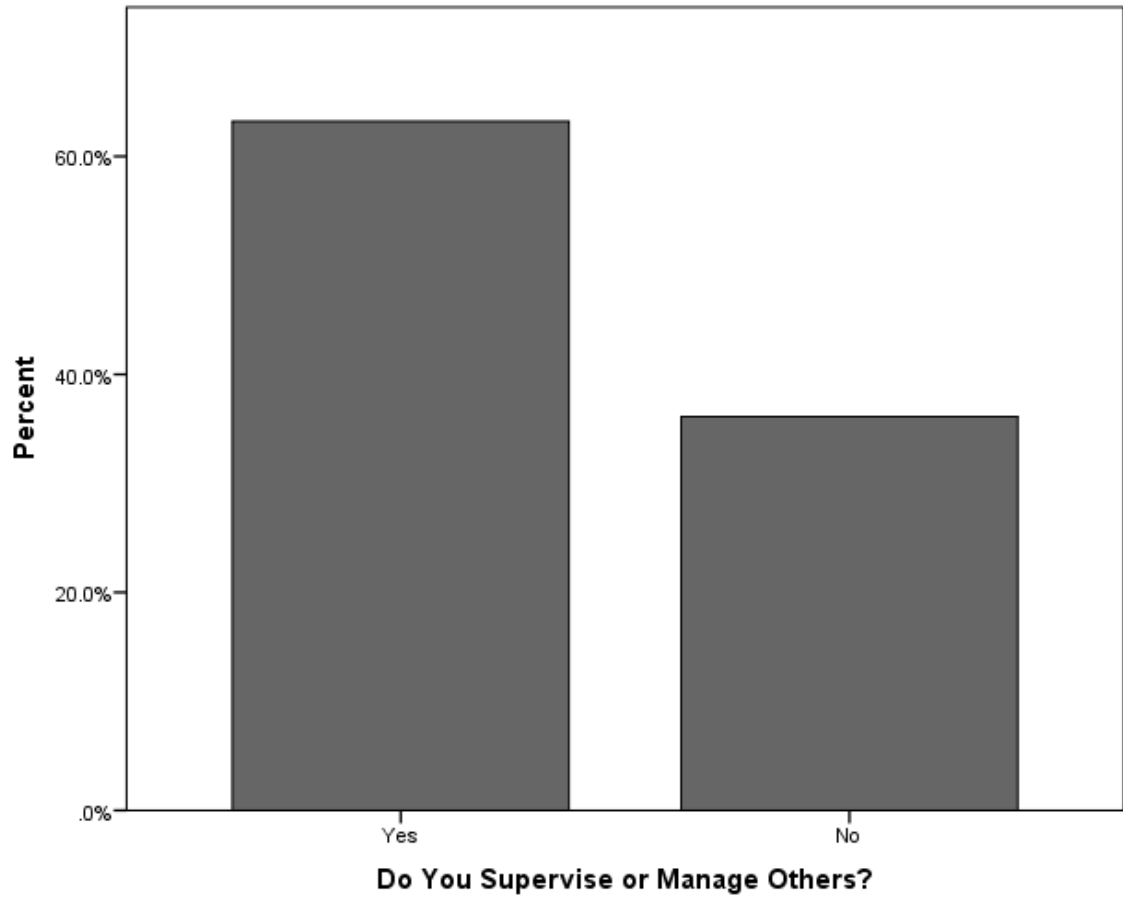


Figure 4. Whether Respondent Supervises/Manages Others.

The following figure presents the distribution of responses on the basis of gender. Here, close to 60% of the sample was found to be female, with approximately 40% being male.

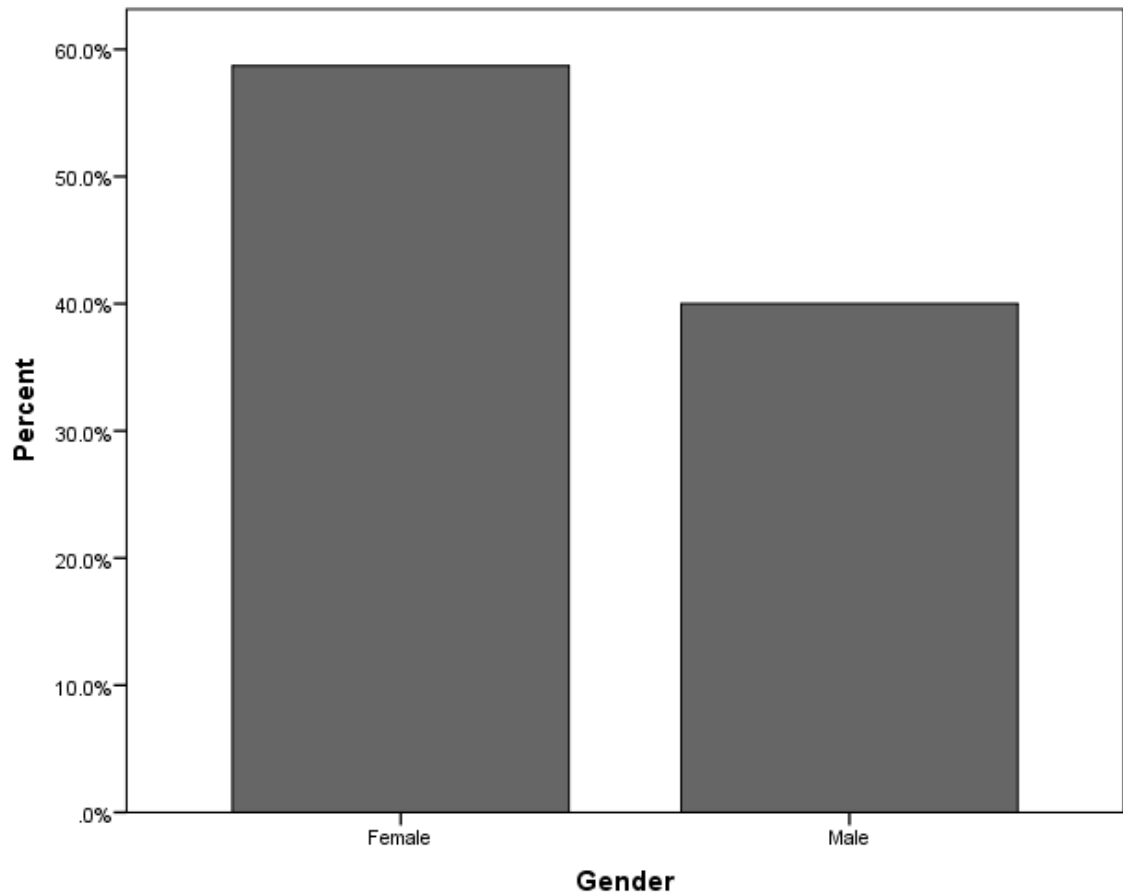


Figure 5. Respondent Gender.

Next, the figure presented below illustrates the distribution of respondents on the basis of age. The most common category of response, composing approximately 35% of the sample, consisted of individuals between the ages of 45 and 60. Slightly over 25% of the sample was found to be between the ages of 30 and 44, with slightly under 25% being between the ages of 18 and 29. Finally, approximately 10% of the sample was found to be aged over 60.

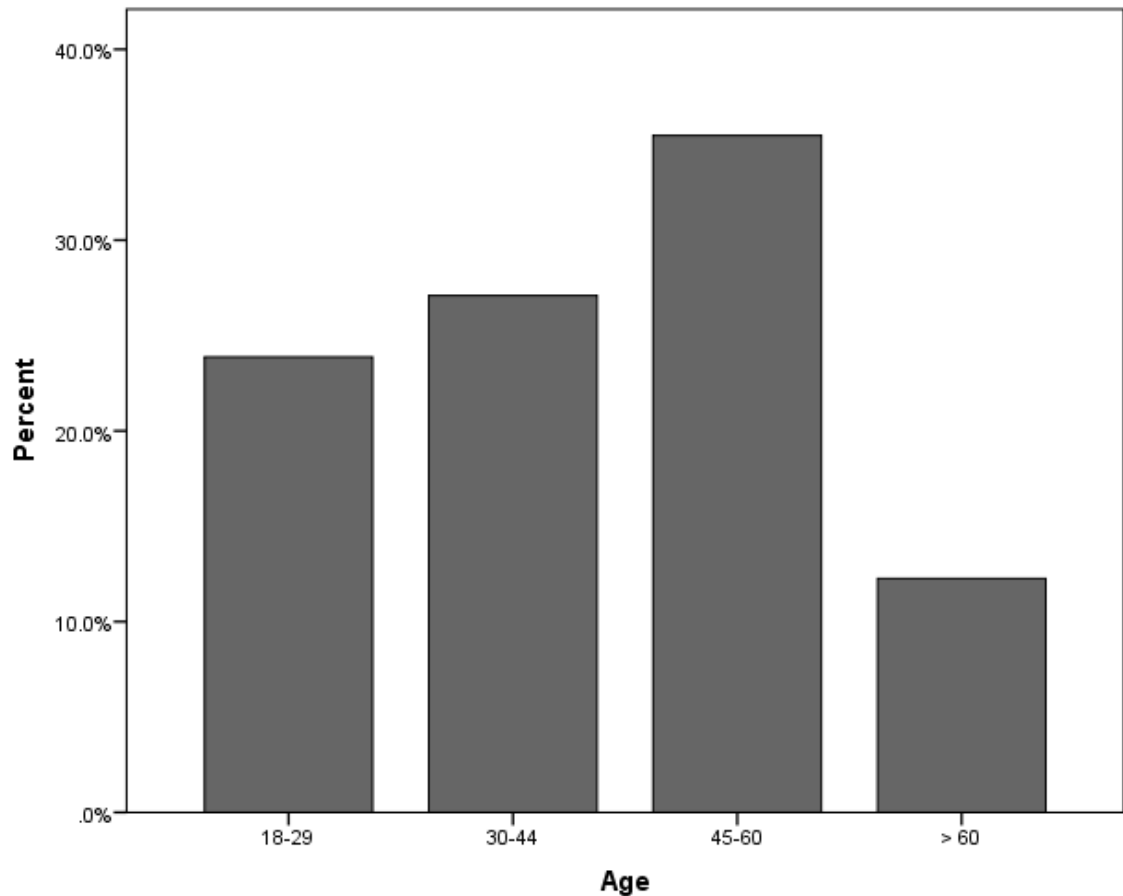


Figure 6. Respondent Age.

Next, the following figure presents an illustration of respondents' household income. Here, the most common category of response, composing slightly over 30% of the sample, consisted of individuals with household incomes above \$150,000 per year. Following this, approximately 25% of the sample had household incomes from \$50,000 to just under \$100,000 per year, with slightly over 15% having household incomes between \$100,000 and just under \$150,000 per year. Next, approximately 15% of the sample had household incomes between \$25,000 and just under \$50,000 per year, with under 10% of the sample having household incomes under \$25,000 per year.

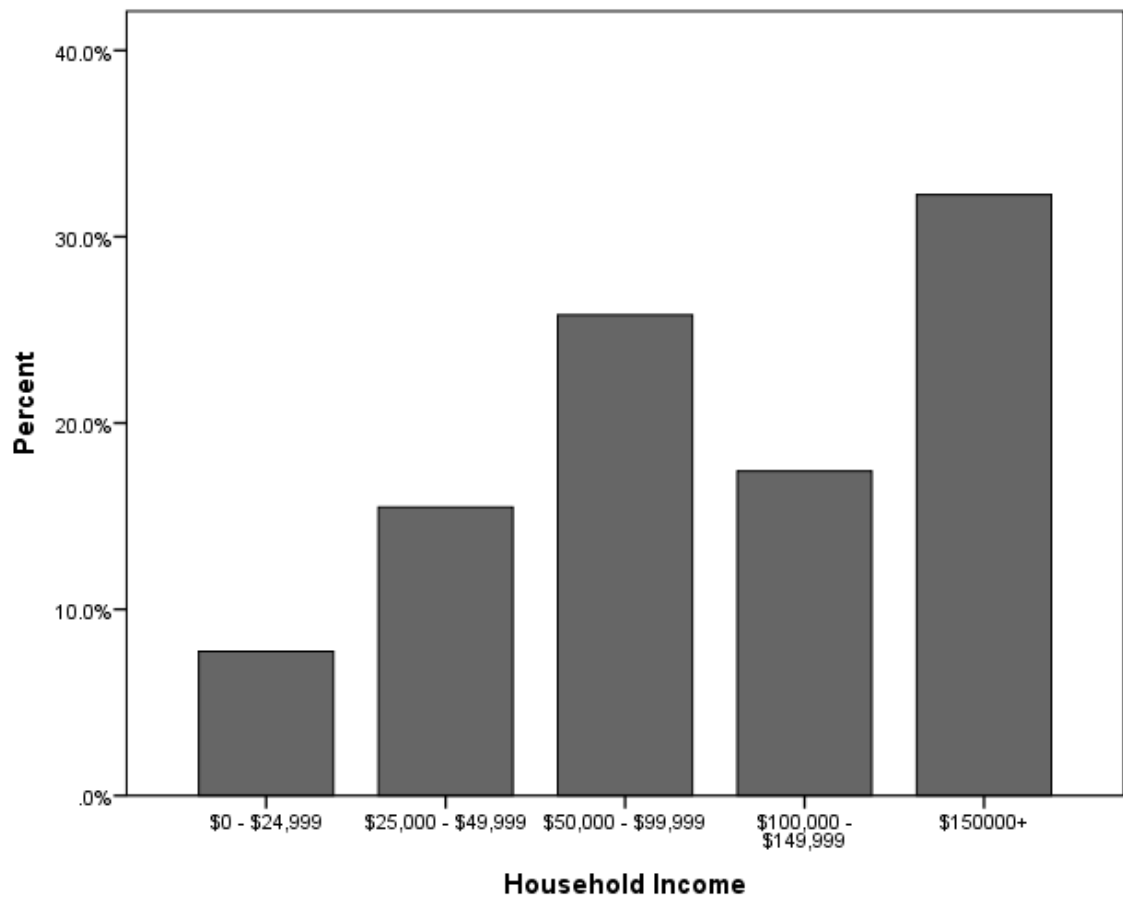


Figure 7. Respondent Household Income.

Following this, respondents were asked about their level of education. These results, summarized in the following figure, illustrate that close to 40% of respondents had an associate or bachelor degree, with slightly over 25% each having a college degree or a graduate degree. Approximately 5% of respondents had a high school degree, with a very small percentage having a less than high school degree.

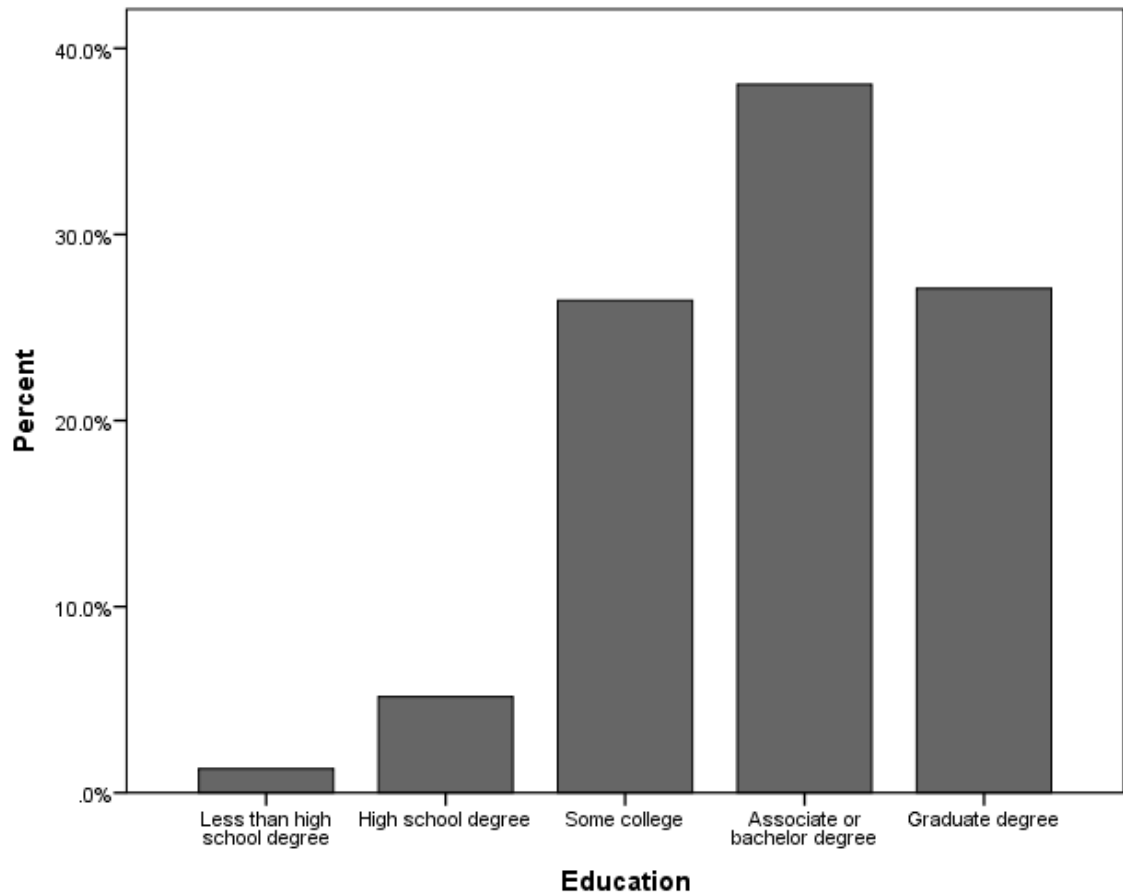


Figure 8. Respondent Education.

Next, the following table summarizes respondents on the basis of region of residence. Between 10% and 15% of respondents were found to reside in the following census regions: East North Central, Middle Atlantic, Mountain, Pacific, South Atlantic, West North Central, and West South Central. Additionally, less than 5% of respondents were found to reside in each of the East South Central and New England regions.

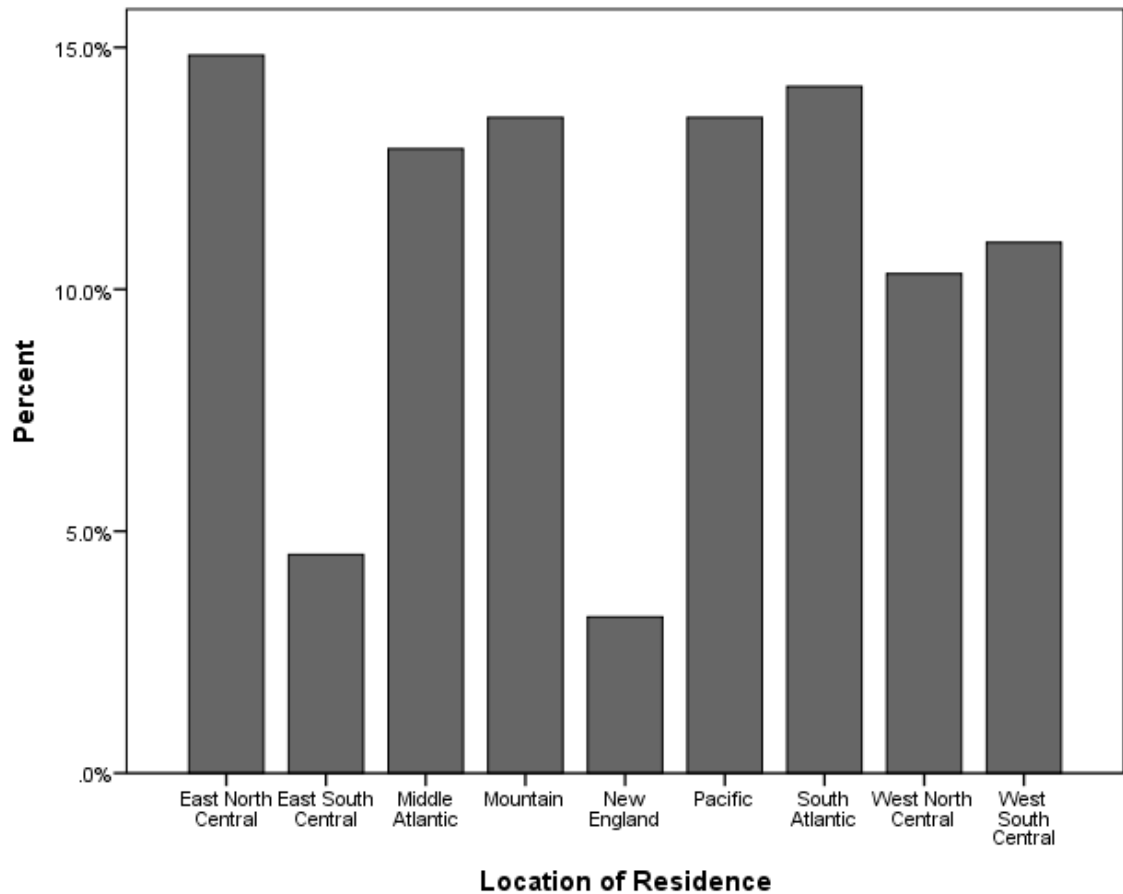


Figure 9. Respondent Location of Residence.

Finally, the following table summarizes responses with respect to job role in relation to interpersonal functions. Interpersonal functions are workplace roles that involving the HR professional interacting with an employee. As shown, the percentage of responses replying in the positive for each of these items range from slightly below 40% to close to 80% of respondents in total.

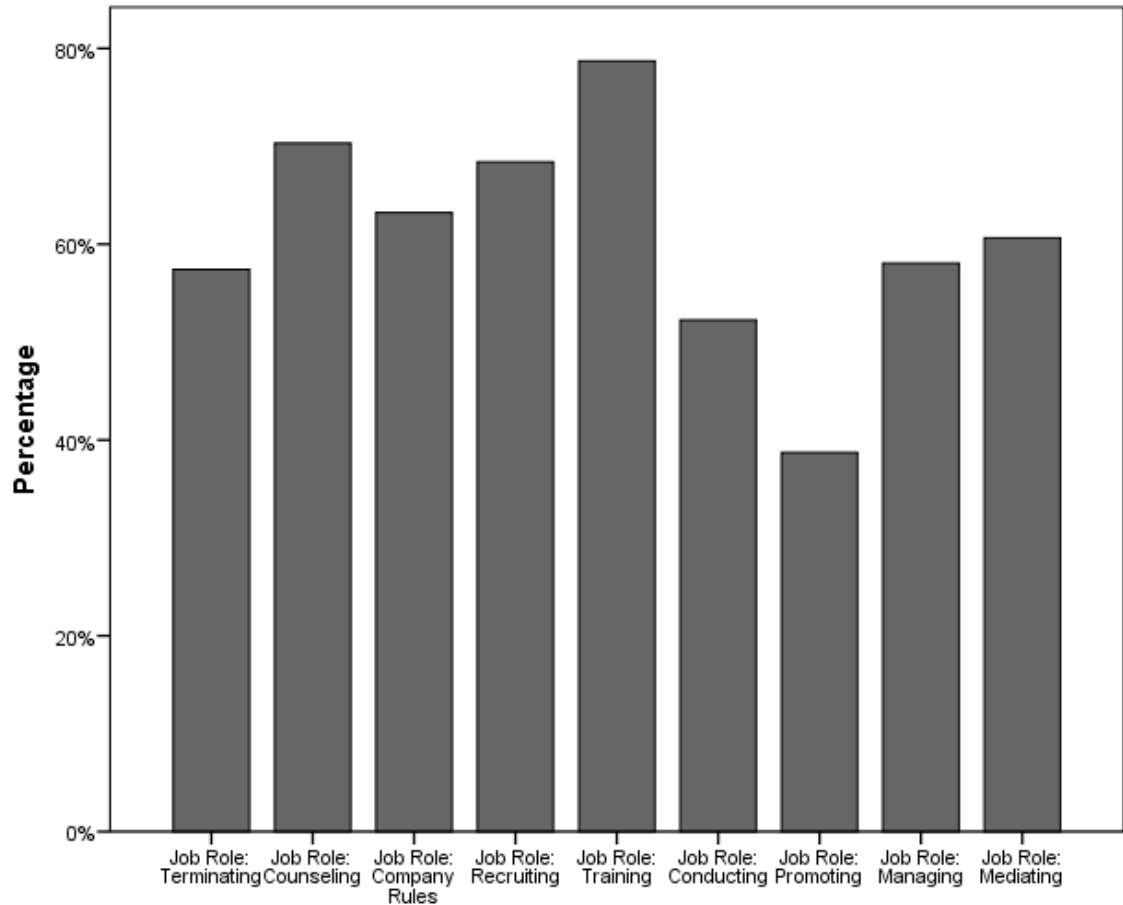


Figure 10. Respondent Job Role involving interpersonal functions/ interacting with an employee.¹

Next, a series of descriptive statistics were conducted on these data, with the four personality styles and the two dimensions of conflict management modes (relationship-oriented cooperative and task-oriented assertive) summarized in the following table. First, the personality styles consisted of the organized, planning personality (Gold), the

¹ This question asked: Does your job role/function ever include terminating or firing an employee, counseling or discussing with employees/staff or subordinates their personal or work-related complaints or concerns; making company rules or company policy; recruiting new employees or selecting or hiring new employees; training new employees; conducting a performance appraisal of subordinates/employees; training new employees; conducting a performance appraisal of subordinates/employees; promoting subordinates/employees; managing employee conduct and or disciplining subordinates; mediating disputes between employees.

analytical, problem-solving personality (Green), the action-oriented, risk-taking personality (Orange), and the harmonious personality (Blue). Additionally, the two dimensions of conflict management modes are concern for task, self, and results or low concern for the relationship (task-oriented assertive) and concern for other or concern for relationships (relationship-oriented cooperative).

First, with regard to the dimensions of conflict management modes, 22.6% of the sample fell within the task-oriented assertive dimension, with 79.4% falling within the relationship-oriented cooperative category. With respect to personality styles, 4.5% of the sample fell within the Orange category, with 54.2% falling within the Green category, 23.9% falling within the Blue category, and 28.4% falling within the Gold category.

The following chart presents the CM dimensions (A or C) and dominant personalities (Gr, O, Go, B) of the respondents. The majority of respondents had conflict management modes that fell within the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension which is supported by Rahim (2001), and the majority of respondents were Green personalities. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that a small percentage of Orange personalities were represented which may be an indication that Orange personalities may more commonly choose other careers but further studies are needed to confirm this.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies

Measure	N	%
<i>CM: Assertiveness</i>		
No	120	77.4
Yes	35	22.6
<i>CM: Cooperativeness</i>		
No	32	20.6

Yes	123	79.4
<hr/>		
<i>P: Orange</i>		
No	148	5.5
Yes	7	4.5
<hr/>		
<i>P: Green</i>		
No	71	45.8
Yes	84	54.2
<hr/>		
<i>P: Blue</i>		
No	118	76.1
Yes	37	23.9
<hr/>		
<i>P: Gold</i>		
No	111	71.6
Yes	44	28.4
<hr/>		

Hypothesis Tests

Following this, a series of tests were conducted in order to examine the research question and hypotheses included within this study. These tests consist of a series of chi-square analyses, while cross-tabulation tables were also specified and are presented here in order to illustrate in further detail the association between the measures in question. As all hypotheses included within this study are directional, one-tailed tests were used in the chi-square analyses conducted, which are reflected in the reported probability levels.

This study incorporated only a single research question, which consisted of the following:

- RQ1.** Is there a relationship between primary personality style, as measured by the WCA, and the two dimensions of conflict management (CM) modes of task-oriented assertive or relationship-oriented cooperative, as measured by the ROCI-II, among HR professionals?

The first hypothesis included within this study focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Blue and preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension (C), as shown below:

- H₀₁. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.
- H_{a1}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

With respect to this initial analysis, the chi-square test was found to achieve significance at the .10 alpha level, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 2.448, p = .094$. The following table illustrates the cross-tabulation between these two variables. As shown, individuals with a dominant personality style of Blue were actually more likely to fall into the task-oriented assertive (A) dimension as compared with the relationship-oriented cooperative (C) dimension of conflict management. Therefore, these results do not support this study's first hypothesis.

Table 4

Hypothesis 1: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Cooperative		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Blue				
No	Count	21	97	118
	% within P: Blue	17.8%	82.2%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	65.5%	78.9%	76.1%
	% of Total	13.5%	62.6%	76.1%
Yes	Count	11	26	37
	% within P: Blue	29.7%	70.3%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	34.3%	21.1%	23.9%
	% of Total	7.1%	16.8%	23.9%
Total	Count	32	123	155
	% within P: Blue	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%

The second hypothesis included within this study focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Gold and the relationship-oriented cooperative (C) conflict management dimension, as shown below:

H₀₂. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

H_{a2}. HR professionals with primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented

cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI–II, as compared to HR professionals with the personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

The chi-square analysis conducted in relation to this hypothesis was not found to achieve significance, indicating that this second alternative hypothesis was not supported, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = .228, p = .406$. As shown in the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Gold were more likely to have a preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension (C); however, this association was not found to achieve statistical significance.

Table 5

Hypothesis 2: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Cooperative		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Gold				
No	Count	24	87	111
	% within P: Gold	21.6%	78.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	75.0%	70.7%	71.6%
	% of Total	15.5%	56.1%	71.6%
Yes	Count	8	36	44
	% within P: Gold	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	25.0%	29.3%	28.4%
	% of Total	5.2%	23.2%	28.4%
Total	Count	32	123	155
	% within P: Gold	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%

Next, this study's third hypothesis focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Green and preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict management dimension, as presented below:

- H₀₃. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.
- H_{a3}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

The chi-square analysis conducted in relation to this hypothesis failed to achieve statistical significance, indicating that this third alternative hypothesis was not supported, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 1.309, p = .171$. Additionally, as shown within the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Green were actually found to have a preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative (C) conflict management dimension.

Table 6

Hypothesis 3: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Assertiveness		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Green				
No	Count	52	19	71
	% within P: Green	73.2%	26.8%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	43.3%	54.3%	45.8%
	% of Total	33.5%	12.3%	45.8%
Yes	Count	68	16	84
	% within P: Green	81.0%	19.0%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	56.7%	45.7%	54.2%
	% of Total	43.9%	10.3%	54.2%
Total	Count	120	35	155
	% within P: Green	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%

This study's fourth hypothesis focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Orange and a preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict resolution style, as shown below.

H₀₄. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

H_{a4}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive

conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

The chi-square analysis conducted in relation to this hypothesis failed to achieve significance, indicating that this fourth alternative hypothesis was not supported, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 1.724, p = .191$. As shown in the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Orange were found to have a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict management dimension, while this association was not significant.

Table 7

Hypothesis 4: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Assertiveness		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Orange				
No	Count	116	32	148
	% within P: Orange	78.4%	21.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	96.7%	91.4%	95.5%
	% of Total	74.8%	20.6%	95.5%
Yes	Count	4	3	7
	% within P: Orange	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	3.3%	8.6%	4.5%
	% of Total	2.6%	1.9%	4.5%
Total	Count	120	35	155
	% within P: Orange	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%

The fifth hypothesis included within this study focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Blue and preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict management dimension, as shown below.

- H₀₅. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.
- H_{a5}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Blue, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Gold.

The chi-square analysis conducted in relation to this hypothesis was found to achieve significance at the .10 alpha level, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 2.698, p = .081$. As shown in the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Blue were found to have a preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict management dimension in the workplace. With this result being indicated along with the fact that significance was achieved at the .10 alpha level, this fifth null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8

Hypothesis 5: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Aggressiveness		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Blue				
No	Count	951	23	118
	% within P: Blue	80.5%	19.5%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	79.2%	65.7%	76.1%
	% of Total	61.3%	14.8%	76.1%
Yes	Count	25	12	37
	% within P: Blue	67.6%	32.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	20.8%	34.3%	23.9%
	% of Total	16.1%	7.7%	23.9%
Total	Count	120	35	155
	% within P: Blue	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%

Next, the sixth hypothesis present within this study focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Gold and a preference for the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict management dimension as shown below.

H₀₆. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA will not display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

H_{a6}. HR professionals with primary personality style of Gold, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive conflict

management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Orange, Green, or Blue.

The chi-square analysis conducted in relation to this hypothesis failed to achieve significance, indicating that this null hypothesis was not rejected, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 1.564$, $p = .149$. Also, the results presented in the following cross-tabulation table indicate that individuals with a personality style of Gold were found to favor the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict resolution mode.

Table 9

Hypothesis 6: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Assertiveness		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Gold				
No	Count	83	28	111
	% within P: Gold	74.8%	25.2%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	69.2%	80.0%	71.6%
	% of Total	53.5%	18.1%	71.6%
Yes	Count	37	7	44
	% within P: Gold	84.1%	15.9%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	30.8%	20.0%	28.4%
	% of Total	23.9%	4.5%	28.4%
Total	Count	120	35	155
	% within P: Gold	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: A	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%

The seventh hypothesis focused upon the association between having a dominant personality style of Green and having a preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as shown below.

H₀₇. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

H_{a7}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Green, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict, management dimension as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Blue, or Orange.

The chi-square analysis conducted for this research question failed to achieve statistical significance, indicating that this seventh null hypothesis was not rejected, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 1.772, p = .129$. Additionally, as shown in the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Green did have a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension; however, this association was not found to achieve statistical significance.

Table 10

Hypothesis 7: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Cooperative		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Green				
No	Count	18	53	71
	% within P: Green	25.4%	74.6%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	56.3%	43.1%	45.8%
	% of Total	11.6%	34.2%	45.8%
Yes	Count	14	70	84
	% within P: Green	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	43.8%	56.9%	54.2%
	% of Total	9.0%	45.2%	54.2%
Total	Count	32	123	155
	% within P: Green	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	20.6%	79.4%	100.0%

This study's final hypothesis focused on the association between having a dominant personality style of Orange and preference with relation to relationship-oriented cooperative (C) conflict management dimension, as shown below.

H₀₈. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will not display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

H_{a8}. HR professionals with a primary personality style of Orange, as measured by the WCA, will display a higher preference for the relationship-oriented

cooperative conflict management dimension, as measured by the ROCI-II, as compared to HR professionals with dominant personality styles of Gold, Green, or Blue.

The chi-square analysis associated with this final hypothesis failed to achieve statistical significance, indicating that this eighth null hypothesis was not rejected, $\chi^2 (1, N = 155) = 2.208, p = .155$. Next, as shown in the following cross-tabulation table, individuals with a dominant personality style of Orange were actually found to favor the task-oriented assertive (A) conflict resolution mode.

Table 11

Hypothesis 8: Cross-tabulations

Measure		CM: Cooperative		Total
		No	Yes	
P: Orange				
No	Count	29	119	148
	% within P: Orange	19.6%	80.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	90.6%	96.7%	95.5%
	% of Total	18.7%	76.8%	95.5%
Yes	Count	3	4	7
	% within P: Orange	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	9.4%	3.3%	4.5%
	% of Total	1.9%	2.6%	4.5%
Total	Count	32	123	155
	% within P: Orange	20.64%	79.4%	100.0%
	% within CM: C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	20.6%	279.4%	100.0%

Summary

The data collected through demographic questions and two validated surveys are discussed in this chapter. The statistical analysis found one hypothesis was accepted. There was a statistically significant correlation found between one of the True Colors personalities and one of the conflict management dimensions. The relationship was found with the Blue personality and the task-oriented assertive dimension. Thus, a relationship does exist between personality and conflict management dimension in the case of the Blue personality. Another finding of this study was that HR professionals want and need more training in the CR skillset for effectively resolving interpersonal conflict for employees in regards to their HR job function.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications of the Study

Discussion

This quantitative, correlational research study examined the relationship between the True Colors personality types and the conflict management dimensions of HR professionals in the United States. The goal of this research was to try to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between personality and conflict management dimension? The present study examined whether personality has an impact on conflict management dimension in the workplace. Statistical testing of the hypotheses confirmed H5 and found a significant relationship between personality and conflict management dimension of HR professionals.

An important aspect of the findings with regards to the demographic questions pertains to conflict resolution education for HR professionals. Three questions were asked of the participants in this study to shed light on the need for CR education and training. Among the data collected, a majority of participants supervised others and said “yes” to wanting and needing the CR skillset regardless of answering “yes” to having learned about conflict resolution in the past. The desired skills include assertiveness, conflict coaching, reflective listening, mediation, negotiation, and understanding behavior. Another interesting finding was the majority of respondents were collaborators. This supported what Rahim (2001) posited that the majority of individuals are collaborators in the workplace. Furthermore, there were a low number of Orange personalities who are HR professionals in this study that may indicate a low preference for working in the HR field among Orange personalities.

The other significant finding in regards to field of conflict resolution and HR is that HR professionals conduct a variety of tasks on an interpersonal, conflict management level. However, most notable about this finding is that there are a variety of functions the HR professional performs and each may require a different conflict management approach. A close look at the data collected regarding the list of job functions that the respondents are engaged in reveals a need for efficacy in both of the conflict management dimensions. Sometimes the task-oriented assertive dimension is needed as in terminating employees and enforcing company rules and policy. Sometimes the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension is needed as in counseling, discussing with employees their personal or work-related complaints or concerns, and mediating. Sometimes a combination of both dimensions is needed as in training new employees.

Implications

Conflict in the workplace if mishandled can lead to serious problems for the company and those involved. The present study implies that a well-conceived training that includes honest, objective self-assessment using an effective instrument such as the WCA and the ROCI-II, training geared towards the understanding and appreciation of the variety of personality and conflict behaviors, and empathetic insight into other peoples' values, strengths, and conflict triggers has the potential to better prepare the HR professional for their job. Moreover, close to 25% of the respondents were Blue personalities which represents a significant percentage of people in that particular career. Thus, the present study implies that targeted training with regard to Blue personalities can encourage specific behavioral changes that can improve their job performance and work-related satisfaction.

Relationship between Personality and CM mode dimension

The literature review revealed a need for further understanding of the relationship between personality and conflict management dimensions. There is a lack of studies that examine the relationship between the True Colors personalities and conflict management mode dimensions. There have been studies looking at various personality models such as the Five Factor model and the Myers-Briggs model, and these have mixed results (Ahmed et al., 2010; Forrester & Tashchian, 2013; Ogunyemi et al. 2011; Wood & Bell, 2008). Furthermore, conflict is a part of organizational life which makes effective conflict management a priority for organizational leaders. HR professionals may do their job more effectively with a better understanding of the relationship between personality style and conflict management mode dimension.

The correlation analysis performed in this study supported the relationship between Blue personalities and the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension. The hypothesis for the Blue personality's relationship with the task-oriented assertive conflict management dimension was confirmed. This showed there was a significant relationship between the Blue personality and the task-oriented assertive dimension of conflict management for HR professionals in the workplace. Thus, the Blue personality of a HR professional is interested in organizational goals and protecting the institution when conducting conflict management. Utilizing this style in the workplace means Blues are less interested in relationship and can act in an assertive and sometimes aggressive way in the workplace according to the data collected in this study. This finding can point to the need for additional training in effective conflict management. The findings in this study indicate that the Blue personality can use more emphasis on

empathy and reflective listening since they tend to use a more task-oriented assertive style in the workplace. This is a profound finding since close to 25% of the sample was a Blue personality. The data collected in this study can dictate where there may be more challenges in training when the Blue personalities are involved.

It is important to note that the ROCI-II survey asked questions pertaining to conflict management behavior in the workplace. Every question asked the HR professional about an interaction with an employee or subordinate in the workplace. The sample was not asked how they would act in conflict outside the workplace. Thus, the personality that had significant relationship with a conflict management dimension may not have that relationship in a different setting. Blue personalities may indeed be relationship-oriented outside of the workplace as indicated by the definition of their personality type. Therefore, the Blue personality may not prefer to use the task-oriented conflict management dimension outside their HR role in the work environment which possibly points to a contradiction regarding their job-related role and their very nature of having a people-person personality.

Contribution of Research

The present study has the potential to shed new light on the process of conflict resolution in the workplace. A limited number of studies have shown that participants can learn and change and gain a sense of control in conflict situations as a result of conflict resolution training (Ziemer, 2012).

As a result of this inquiry, this researcher posits that the first step in choosing how to proceed in a conflict situation would be to step back and assess the situation. This would mean to incorporate the cliché “take time to

cool off” and give a person something to think about before they react to a conflict situation. This requires an individual to assess both the personality and conflict management style of themselves and the other parties before proceeding to react, resolve or use their preferred conflict management style (Landau et al., 2001).

Ethics and Reflexivity

Ethical standards and compliance with the regulations of the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was upheld throughout this study. IRB protocol was followed including filing a Request for Review form. A letter of recruitment was created for this study describing the nature of the study and the requirements for participation in the study. All potential respondents were asked for their permission to be included in this study and were told that their responses are confidential. The participants’ responses were numerically coded to ensure anonymity of respondents. The participants’ names were not collected. All participants were offered a nominal inducement that was reported to and approved by the IRB. The inducement was in the form of a non-cash \$.50 donation to a charity of their choice, and the entry into an instant win sweepstakes to win \$100.00 when the participant completes the survey in its entirety. The winners were chosen randomly and notified electronically.

This topic is important to the researcher for a number of reasons. First, I am the author of *Peaceful Colors: How to Prevent and Resolve Everyday Conflicts using True Colors* (2001). This researcher has found True Colors to be very “user-friendly” and understandable to many people because of its simplicity. This researcher uses the True Colors Personality assessment to help make decisions based on the researcher’s personality values, strengths, and needs. The researcher also uses it to help build

connections and communicate with people because it provides a better understanding of what the values, strengths, needs and conflict triggers are of others based on their True Colors' personality. In the researcher's professional life, True Colors is used when training mediators. This is because True Colors is a helpful tool that provides insight into interpersonal conflicts. For example, two personalities such as Orange and Gold view organization, structure, and rules very differently which can cause interpersonal conflict.

The fact that True Colors personality assessment, conflict management assessment and appropriate behavioral choices regarding interpersonal conflict are important to me may not affect my statistical findings. However, this researcher has a desire to find statistical support for the usefulness of these tools.

Potential Implications of This Study

Understanding individual personality types of HR professionals is an important aspect of workplace conflict management that is not always included in the HR curriculum, HR continuing education, or HR trainings. It is helpful to the field to know if there is a relationship between the personality dispositions (as measured by the True Colors WCA Personality Assessment Instrument) and conflict management style preferences (as measured by the ROCI-II Instrument). This is because personality theory supports the idea that there are predictable patterns of behavior. That information about individuals can provide insight into conflict situations and is a powerful tool in conflict management. It is a powerful tool because it provides reasons for each disputing party's values, strengths, conflict triggers, perceptions, and motivations. Education of HR professionals in this subject can lead to improved relationships, increased job satisfaction, and increased retention of both HR managers and employees. Furthermore, this study can

help HR trainers and educators to design useful educational materials and curriculum that includes personality assessment and conflict behaviors as tools for insight and building self-efficacy (Lipsky et al., 2003). Another implication of the results of this study is that HR professionals can increase their competency and help employees manage conflicts and negotiate in ways that they can use with others inside and outside of the workplace.

It is hoped that the results of this research can also be used to help HR professionals create a culture that is more empathetic, collaborative, and pro-active towards conflict management (Schien, 2010). This knowledge can help be a mitigating factor against workplace violence, lawsuits, employee turnover (DelPo & Guerin, 2005), loss of money, resources, and energy (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011), and help HR professionals who deal with problem employees who may have bad attitudes, blame others, bring personal problems to work, and argue with others (DelPo & Guerin, 2005; Messmer, 1999; Shepard, 2005). This study can also improve workplace culture and lessen health problems caused by anxiety and stress.

Two implications arise from this study. The first implication pertains to the HR professional's personality and conflict management dimension. The second implication involves the need for more specific conflict resolution training for HR professionals as it relates to their various job interpersonal and conflict-related functions.

The first implication of this research may help HR professionals better understand the relationship between personality and conflict management styles. With that better understanding, HR professionals may handle interpersonal conflict in the workplace more effectively. This study can be used as an appraisal and management development tool to inform HR professionals that attention is needed to both the task-oriented assertive

dimension and relationship-oriented cooperative CM dimension. The second implication from this research study can contribute to the content of conflict management HR trainings. HR professionals who are trained to be aware of the relationship between personality and conflict management style can scrutinize their own conflict management modes and see how it relates to their personality in regards to their values and strengths.

Conflict is complex. It is not always the same in every situation. Therefore, it cannot always be approached in the same manner. HR training and education curriculum can help participants effectively deal with conflict. One way to do this is to heighten awareness to the diverse approaches called for by conflict situations while also being aware of personality differences as they relate to conflict triggers and needs. This training will help HR professionals handle different conflicts more effectively by utilizing the skills most appropriately related to a particular CM approach. The HR professional performs various functions and the functions call for different skills and different conflict management styles.

Broad impacts may result from this study. This study can help organizational and social change because there may be trickle down effects of effectively managing conflicts. The ripple effects can happen when people watch and learn from role-models how to collaboratively problem-solve, use better communication skills, and understand and value the differences in people (Bowman-Kestner & Ray, 2002). Additionally, systems theory supports the concept that if one area of a person's life is improved it can benefit the whole of society or the organization (Senge, 1990).

Recommendations

This study looks at the relationship between personality type and one's preferred conflict management mode. It is about optimal functioning during conflict. This topic is useful to those working in the HR field because they come across a diverse array of personalities and conflict modes in the workplace. HR professionals better understand themselves and those around them in the workplace with the information from this study. HR professionals will have a better understanding of individual behavior when using personality assessment combined with the knowledge of conflict management styles. HR professionals will be enabled to better communicate, resolve conflicts, enforce policy, and motivate the workforce.

The information from this study will also enhance professional relationships and can be used to create a more successful, professional environment. The knowledge from this study could lend itself to improved communication, as well as clearer understanding of conflict resolution approaches as the people gain an awareness and a choice of skills to use depending on what is needed in particular workplace conflict situations. HR students can learn to identify the personality and conflict resolution modes of others based on the words they use, their behavior, and actions.

Instructors and trainers of HR professionals and HR degree and non-credit continuing education students can include the topic of conflict management and conflict modes in HR curriculum. This will ensure HR students and HR professionals will learn about this subject and understand it in order to better resolve conflicts in the workplace. Secondly, HR students and HR professionals will be better prepared to do their job as an HR manager with this knowledge. Instructors and trainers can design activities that

center around the HR management role and incorporate information regarding conflict management.

The following three bar charts were constructed in order to illustrate the distribution of respondents on the basis of three questions pertaining to an HR professional's education and use of conflict resolution skills as part of their job function. This information was collected as a tool for instructors and trainers of HR professionals and HR degree and non-credit continuing education programs in order to support the topic of conflict management and conflict modes in HR curriculum.

The following chart presents the distribution of respondents on the basis of their job/role using interpersonal conflict resolution. Not all respondents answered this question. More than 50% of all respondents answered "yes" to performing one or more interpersonal conflict resolution task. Most commonly 80% of HR professionals in this study trained new employees; slightly over 70% counseled or discussed problems with employees regarding personal or work-related complaints or concerns; 60% terminated or fired employees; slightly over 60% made company rules or company policy; slightly less than 70% recruited new employees or selected or hired; slightly more than 50% conducted a performance review; 40% promoted subordinates; slightly less than 60% managed employee conduct or disciplining subordinates; and slightly more than 60% mediated disputes between employees.

Next, the figure presented below illustrates the distribution of the respondents on the basis of conflict resolution knowledge. Not all respondents answered this question. Here, close to 55% of the sample was found to respond "yes" to whether they have ever learned about conflict resolution (mediation, win/win negotiation, conflict resolution,

and/or conflict coaching) in an HR class or at an HR training. Slightly over 40% answered no to this question.



Figure 11. Respondent Education in Conflict Resolution.

The data collected from the previous question indicated that over 55% of respondents have learned about some form of conflict resolution. However, the following data supports the need for more training and education in this area. The figure presented below illustrates the distribution of respondents on the basis of desire to learn specific conflict resolution functions or skills. For the most common category of response, composing of approximately close to 50% of individuals who wanted to learn more conflict coaching and/or reflective listening, between 40%-50% of all respondents indicated that they desired to learn more assertiveness skills (state facts, feelings, needs, and wants in a non-aggressive way), mediation, negotiation, and understanding behavior.

The smallest percentage was slightly over 20%. These were the percentage of respondents who were interested in learning about anger management.

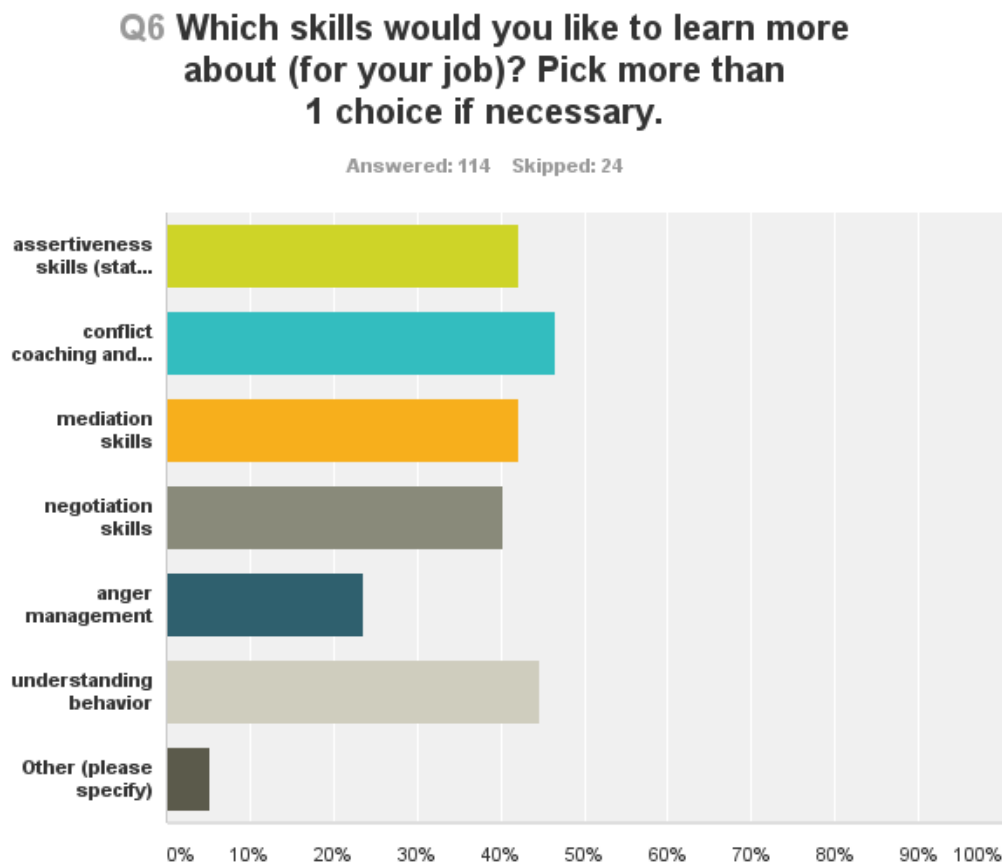


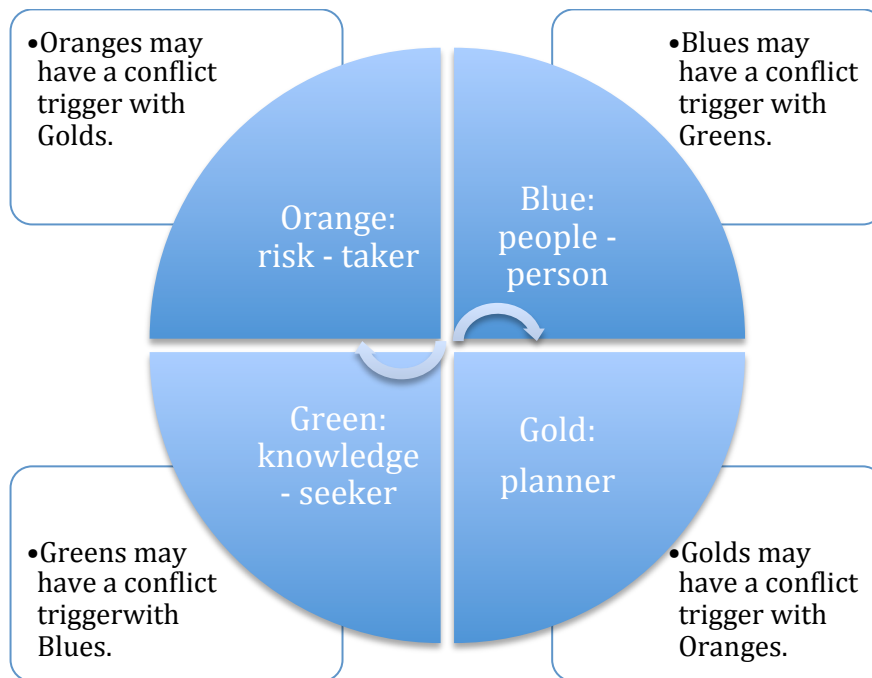
Figure 12. Respondent Desired Conflict Resolution Skills.²

HR professionals can learn conflict resolution theory and skills in both degree programs and continuing education trainings. They can learn to identify others personality traits and preferred conflict mode to be used as an aide to leadership behavior, assertiveness skills (stating facts, feelings, needs, and wants in a non-aggressive way),

² This question asked: Which skills would you like to learn more about (for your job) - assertiveness skills (non-aggressively state facts, feelings, needs, and wants); conflict coaching and/or reflective listening; mediation skills; negotiation skills; anger management; understanding behavior.

mediation, negotiation, understanding behavior, anger management, communication, efficacy, self-esteem, interviewing, and having difficult conversations. Thus, HR students and HR professionals who recognize behavioral patterns can be better prepared to manage conflict.

Moreover, case studies can be created by instructors/trainers that are specific to students' HR functions and involve the students in discussions pertaining to their personality trait and preferred conflict-handling mode. Projects and activities can examine appropriate use of each mode and strategies for working with less preferred modes. Case studies can examine how to use the knowledge to have critical conversations while effectively managing conflict. An example of a case study to be added to the curriculum can involve an employee whose primary color is the Orange personality and the HR professional whose primary color is a Gold personality. These two people can get in conflict over each individual's way of performing tasks based on their personality triggers. Direct conflict triggers can be related to each personality. Orange personalities and Gold personalities are contrasted in the way they view organizing, planning, and risk-taking. Blue and Green personalities are contrasted in the amount of time spent with data and people. Thus, if there are two co-workers who handle products or tools, they may each put them away differently in a drawer. The Gold person will have an organized and even color-coded system while the Orange co-worker will put them away in a more random fashion. Each technique may cause conflict for the other person due to expectations and values.



*Figure 13. Personality Type Categories and Possible Conflict Triggers.*³

These same individuals can then get further entrenched in the conflict as each personality has a different preferred conflict handling mode (possibly competing vs. avoiding). These differences could result in both parties feeling misunderstood and frustrated. Role-playing can serve to prepare a person for this scenario.

Furthermore, projects, readings, case studies, discussions, and group activities can be designed in a way to enhance students' understanding of themselves and others better. Students can use these in-class activities to identify their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to problem-solving, having critical conversations, motivating employees, setting goals, and providing feedback.

Another recommended use of this subject is to use it for self-reflection of one's behavior and understand how others may misinterpret them. There may be a great

³ Conflict triggers are caused by behavior and values that are opposite of the dominant personality type. A trigger can be determined by an individual's personality that is least like them.

difference in opinion as to whether people perform their job well and are team players or good workers based on their personalities and their conflict-handling mode. This is because differences in behavior and differences in conflict approaches can cause frustration, annoyance, and tension between people. Each personality type may be viewed negatively by another personality type. Blues may be viewed as illogical, trusting, smothering, touchy-feely, and sensitive. Greens may be viewed as being a know-it-all, insensitive, aloof, hard to get close to, critical, not compassionate, and not a team player. Gold personalities may be viewed by others as controlling, inflexible, unimaginative, judging, and predictable. Furthermore, Orange personalities may be viewed as unable to focus, risk-takers, immature, irresponsible, and can't stay still.

Bolton (1979) warns that an individual's choice of a particular conflict style does not always lead to positive results. The following is a listing by Bolton of some of the negative consequences of using the different conflict modes (1979). Competing can be viewed by non-competitors as being competitive, dominating, abusive, a person who "blows up", taking things too seriously, not caring about feelings, violating the needs of others, behaving destructively, and being a fighter. Competing can cause others to be "stand-offish", alienating, bitter, want to stay away, and not want to get too involved. Collaborating can be viewed as taking too much time to resolve an issue, to spend too much time talking and analyzing, and being indecisive. Compromising can be viewed as not being passionate enough to put time in to problem-solving, not caring, and in a rush. Avoiders and accommodators can be viewed by non-avoiders and non-accommodators as easily persuaded, easily taken advantage of, give-in easily, not caring too much, not passionate about topics, avoiding feelings, not open and honest, and too submissive.

Finally, Mitchell and Gamlem (2012) stress the importance of an HR professional being skilled at having “critical conversations” (p. 196). They explain important conversations involve speaking with and analyzing a perspective employee’s words and actions, and interpreting present employee’s words and actions, discussing performance, disciplining an employee, resolving a conflict or negotiating, motivating, looking into a troubling issue, and speaking to an employee about a raise, promotion, or a demotion. Many people either avoid a difficult conversation or conduct it ineffectively (Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). All of these important conversations can be handled more effectively with the understanding that people have different ways of handling conflict which affect communication and behavior, and each of these ways are valuable to use in certain situations.

It is also helpful to understand that each individual may choose their style in a given situation based on their personality, interests, values, and habits (Katz et al., 2011). One person may have Blue personality concerns about damaging relationships that takes precedence for them over fully resolving a conflict. On the other hand, Gold personalities may be very interested in establishing rules and boundaries and choose an approach that will be less about relationships and more about personal goals. It is important to understand one’s own preferred conflict mode while identifying and understanding the conflict style of the other person (Mitchell & Gamlem, 2012). For example, many of the more critical conversations may not happen if a party is an avoider. Or, if a party is aggressive, the conversation may end badly. Thus, knowledge regarding one’s strengths and weaknesses when it comes to resolving conflict can have an effect on having critical

conversations, motivating employees, setting goals, providing feedback, and avoiding unnecessary stress, tension, and potential lawsuits.

Limitations

Some limitations are to be considered regarding this research study. First, this study relied on two self-reporting instruments that were placed together in one online instrument. The data relied on honest answers that were clearly understood by the participant and were not subject to respondent fatigue regarding the number of questions. Second, the sample asked questions only as they pertained to the workplace. Thus, careful consideration must be given to the results regarding personality and conflict management style with regard to environment and context. Third, the reliability of the instruments themselves can be a limitation. The ROCI-II instrument asks the same question a number of times throughout the survey. It appears to rely on answers being repeated. However, this can lead to respondent fatigue. On the other hand, the WCA's use of specific words to capture a personality behavior must be precise and distinctive when contrasted with the other words in the question so as not to confuse the respondent.

Future Research Concepts

Future research on the relationship between personality and conflict management dimensions is needed. This research study can be repeated by using different samples of individuals in managerial, policy-making, policy-enforcing, and leadership capacity. It would be important to have larger samples when duplicating this study in order to ensure greater reliability in the findings. Each hypothesis from this study can be explored further with larger samples where it was found that a personality had a preference for a particular dimension but the association was not found to achieve statistical significance. For

example, Gold and Green personalities were more likely to have a preference for the relationship-oriented cooperative dimension, but this association was not found to achieve statistical significance and Orange personalities were found to have a higher preference for the task-oriented assertive dimension, but the association was not found to achieve statistical significance. Thus, larger sample sizes may indeed lend themselves to one or more of these personalities having an association with one of the conflict management dimensions.

A number of other future research concepts could be inspired by this study. One could examine the hypothesis regarding Blue personalities that was supported by statistical analysis from this study. Blue personalities could either be studied outside the workplace or their satisfaction at performing different HR functions (promoting harmony and collaborative problem solving vs. firing and enforcing rules and regulations). A study could investigate the Blue personality's conflict management dimension when in a parenting role. Second, further research can be conducted by exploring if each demographic variable helps determine conflict management style. Third, future studies could look at whether there is a relationship between personalities and conflict management mode dimensions in other leadership roles such as parenting. Fourth, the relationship between job functions and conflict management can be examined. Fifth, the relationship between whether each dominant personality tends to engage in a specific type of conflict (results-oriented issues or relationship-oriented issues) could be analyzed in a potential research project. Sixth, the relationship between personality type categories and conflict triggers caused by the other personalities is another future research question.

Conclusion

This quantitative, correlational study found that there is a relationship between personality and conflict management dimension at work in regards to the Blue personality. The Blue personality in this study's sample had a preference for the task-oriented assertive dimension of conflict management. This is surprising because choosing task-oriented conflict management dimension over concern for relationship dimension appears to go against the Blue personality's natural inclination of being a "people-person" valuing relationships. The Blue personality of a HR professional was found to value organizational goals and protecting the institution when conducting conflict management in the workplace. Using this style in the workplace means they are less interested in relationship and act in an assertive and sometimes aggressive way when performing their role as HR professional.

In light of this finding, an assumption that can be derived is that the people-person, harmony-loving, Blue personality will put the organization first before relationships in the workplace. This may cause feelings of internal anguish and stress for the Blue personality when firing and enforcing company rules. This is because these HR job functions are sometimes done at the expense of relationships. The internal anguish may be a result of acting against their inherent Blue nature of needing and valuing harmony. This can be an important point to work on in HR training since the nature of dealing with people in the HR field appeals to Blue personalities. However, some job functions such as firing and enforcing rules and regulations can lead to the Blue individual to be unhappy with their job and possibly leaving their job due to stress and internal anguish.

The findings of this research answered the research question. This was a unique and novel study in that it paired the WCA and ROC-II instruments for the first time in order to investigate the relationship between primary personality type and conflict management dimension. This study contributed to the small amount of studies that look at these two topics within the HR field. Insight into the dynamics regarding the relationships between the two can provide insight into more effective conflict management practice in the workplace.

The data from this study also revealed HR professionals who are Green outnumbered the other personality groups in this study while the Orange personality was the smallest group. Furthermore, the preferred CM conflict management style is collaborative for the HR professionals in this sample. This research study also revealed that HR professionals have limited training in the CR skillset, and they indicated a need and desire for more training and knowledge.

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Appendix A: Permission to Use the Word Cluster Assessment for Research

From: Connie Jennings - True Colors International

<cjennings@truecolorsintl.com>

Date: July 19, 2013 3:33:34 PM EDT

To: Gail Shapiro <gailshap@optonline.net>

Subject: RE: Hi

Hi Gail,

Good to hear all is moving along for you. This is to confirm that we have received your note and we do grant permission as a one time use of our Word Cluster Assessment for the purpose of research to collect the data needed for your Doctoral Dissertation. True Colors would appreciate receiving your findings.

Thank you,

Connie Jennings, True Colors Intl.

Appendix B: Sample of the Word Cluster Assessment Instrument

True Colors Word Sort

Describe yourself: In the rows below are groups of word clusters printed horizontally. Look at all of the letters in the first row (A,B,C,D). Read the words and decide which group of words is most like you. Give that letter a “4”. Then rank order the next three letters from 3 to 1 in descending preference. You will end up with a row of four letters, ranked from “4” meaning most like you to “1” meaning least like you. Continue this process with the remaining rows down the page until you end up with five horizontal rows that each has 4,3,2,1 rankings.

Row One

A_____	B_____	C_____	D_____
Active	Parental	Authentic	Versatile
Opportunistic	Traditional	Harmonious	Inventive
Spontaneous	Responsible	Compassionate	Competent

Row Two

E_____	F_____	G_____	H_____
Curious	Unique	Practical	Competitive
Conceptual	Empathetic	Sensible	Impetuous
Knowledgeable	Communicative	Dependable	Impactful

Row Three

I_____	J_____	K_____	L_____
Loyal	Devoted	Realistic	Theoretical
Conservative	Warm	Open-minded	Seeking
Organized	Poetic	Adventuresome	Ingenious

Row Four

M_____	N_____	O_____	P_____
Concerned	Daring	Tender	Determined
Procedural	Impulsive	Inspirational	Complex
Cooperative	Fun	Dramatic	Composed

Row Five

Q_____	R_____	S_____	T_____
Philosophical	Vivacious	Exciting	Orderly
Principled	Affectionate	Courageous	Conventional
Rational	Sympathetic	Skillful	Caring

Add the corresponding numbers (1,2,3 or 4) that you assigned to each letter together in each color below. The color with the highest ranking is your color.

ORANGE_____

(A,H,K,N,S)

GOLD_____

(B,G,I,M,T)

BLUE_____

(C,F,J,O,R)

GREEN_____

(D,E,L,P,Q)

Appendix C: Research Instrument: Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory–II (ROCI–II)

Correspondence dated: 2/18/14 “Hi there. Your recent order on Dr. Afzal Rahim has been completed. Your order details are shown below for your reference: order #233.”

Condition for using or reproducing the instrument (Center for Advanced Studies in Management on 2/18/14).

“1. You cannot reproduce all the items in a questionnaire in your research report. You can provide one item for each subscale in an instrument.”

The ROCI–II is a 28-item self-report survey instrument designed to measure five independent dimensions of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict in organizations. Form B of this instrument measures how an organizational member handles conflict with her (his) subordinates. The five styles of handling conflict are measured with 7, 6, 5, 6, and 4 statements, respectively. An organizational member responds to each statement on a 5–point Likert (box) scale (5 = Strongly Agree . . . 1 = Strongly Disagree).

Sample items of the instrument are:

1. I try to investigate an issue with my subordinates to find a solution acceptable to us. (integrating)
2. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my subordinates. (obliging)
3. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted. (dominating)
4. I attempt to avoid being “put on the spot” and try to keep my conflict with my subordinates to myself.
5. I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse. (compromising)

Appendix D: Permission to Use ROCI-II Instrument

Hi Ms. Shapiro,

We are delighted to know that you are planning to use our conflict instrument--*Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II*--in your research. If you wish to know the psychometric properties of the instrument, you should order its *Manual* as well.

Seven instruments including the ROCIs are now published by the Center for Advanced Studies in Management. Please fill out and return the attached Order Form so that we can send you our camera-ready instrument and a complimentary comprehensive Bibliography. Minimum order for any instrument is for 300 copies. Special arrangement has to be made for collecting data through website.

If you wish, you can visit our website (AfzalRahim.com) and submit your order there.

The ROCI-II measures the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict, such as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Forms A, B, and C measure how an individual handles conflict with supervisor, subordinates, and colleagues, respectively.

Please consult the following publication for up-to-date information on the measurement and conflict management:

Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing Conflict in Organizations* (4th ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

We would like to receive a copy of the report when the study is completed.

Thanks.

Mir S. Haque, Manager
Center for Advanced Studies in Management
1574 Mallory Court
Bowling Green, KY 42103, USA
1988mgmt@gmail.com

Appendix E: Invitation Letter of Recruitment to Take an Optional Online Survey

Dear Research Participant,

I am a doctoral student at the Nova Southeastern University, which is located in Davie, Florida in the United States of America. I am pursuing a doctorate degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution – Specializing in Organization and School Conflict. I am conducting a research study entitled The Relationship Between Personality Type and Conflict Management Style. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between personality and the conflict management behavior of Human Resource Professionals.

Your participation will involve completing two instruments that are included in this survey. The instruments are the Rahim Organizational Conflict Instrument and the True Colors Word Cluster Assessment. The time required to complete the survey instruments is estimated to be between 20 to 30 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will never be used and your results will be maintained in strict confidence.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you. There are also no direct benefits for research participants. The results of this study will provide valuable research data in the field of conflict analysis and resolution. These results will provide valuable information on personality type and conflict management behavior.

If you choose to see the results of your assessment, I can send them to you after the final defense of my dissertation.

I am thankful that you have taken the time to read this letter and I thank you for participating in this study.

Warm regards.

Gail J. Shapiro

Doctoral Candidate
Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Humanities & Social Sciences
Department of Conflict Analysis & Resolution
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314